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STARBURST

2010

**ARTHUR C. CLARKE'S
SECOND ODYSSEY
ON THE SCREEN**

**THE WACKY RETRO-
FUTURE OF *BRAZIL***

**HI-TECH TERRORS
FROM DOWN UNDER-
DEATH WARMED UP**





Volume 7, Number 7
April 1985 issue

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Left: The new *Starburst* editor is escorted to his office. Or is this the end of the line for one of the rebels in Brazil?

Editorials are, for the most part, a necessary inconvenience for readers and writers alike. Even introductory do-or-diatribes such as this one. So I'll be brief.

Arriving as the new editor on an established magazine like *Starburst* will no doubt raise some apprehension amongst faithful readers as to the possible changes which might ensue. Our first priority is tackling the tardy schedule, but rest assured, most of the familiar names providing the facts (and opinions) on the fantastic will still be around, and there'll also be some new monikers on the roster.

Similarly, and without playing our hand too much, expect greater coverage of two neglected media—television and comics, and the

occasional purview of pop videos. Then there's the 'new' look *Starburst* (what, *again*? I hear you groan) which will be confusing our retailers two or three issues from now.

There's also this little matter of being a British magazine. . . which neatly segues into The British Animation Year (commencing in February), and the British Film Year, which kicks off in March. There's been little fuss over the former, but we'll be looking at the work of some of this country's foremost animators, including John Halas and Bob Godfrey, in this celebratory year.

On the other hand, the much publicised British Film Year (BFY) has already seen its supporters and detractors pitch camp, unfortunately before the organisers have had the

opportunity to institute their programmes.

The aim of BFY is to encourage people to return to the cinema to see films, and to highlight Britain's "unmatched wealth of film-making talents, skills and facilities". A tall order, and *Starburst* will be carrying a semi-regular series of features on the BFY, naturally concentrating on the fantasy field, and their touring Roadshow unit, which, among other things, will have displays of special effects, make-up, costumes and stunts, and demonstrations of film-making techniques.

Additionally, we will be running a special competition to tie in with the BFY, but more on that later.

Cefn Ridout

• LETTERS •

SLATED

I get pretty darn annoyed when you slate *Supergirl* in your magazine. It just so happens that I liked this film. Alright, so your reviewers are entitled to their opinions, but there is no need to totally obliterate a film, just because you don't happen to like it.

I think that I appreciated the sincerity of the film. Let's face it, this is a nice (no apologies for that word) piece of viewing. If something like *The Terminator* is more up your street, fair enough, but please don't ram your likes and dislikes so forcibly down our throats.

As for Helen Slater, she is a good actress, and should go far. That is my opinion.

Nicholas Penn,
Higham Ferrers,
Northants.

Not everyone at Starburst slates Slater (our resident video columnist, Barry Forshaw, has a good word to say for *Supergirl* in his review next issue), but we all agree *The Terminator* is light years ahead; perhaps not in niceness, certainly in excitement.

FRANK LETTER

We are pleased and privileged to announce the formation of *Friends of Frank Ashmore*, an officially sanctioned fan organisation for the fine actor who portrayed Martin on the highly-rated "V".

Mr Ashmore will be working with us on all phases of the group's activities and publications, which will ensure immediate information on his work in "V". The Series, as well as his past and future performances. We are delighted to inform your readers that Frank will return to "V". The Series on February 15 as Martin's twin brother, Philip - his return is a great tribute to the loyalty and support of his many fans here in the States and overseas.

Come - join us for the fun and friendship and help us to support a truly fine, gifted



"Down the road, first left at the pub on the corner, you can't miss it." Peter O'Toole gives Helen Slater directions on the way out of the Phantom Zone in *Supergirl*.

actor, Frank Ashmore. For further information send an International Reply Coupon to:

Barbara Fister-Liltz,
8601-A Cermak Road,
North Riverside,
Illinois 60546,
U.S.A.

FILM MUSIC

I was interested to discover, while rooting through some back issues of one of *Starburst's* imported counterparts, an article on the enfant terrible of contemporary film music, James Horner. After a quick rundown of the composer's life and compositions to date, it then continued as a critique of the movies he has composed for, rather than the musical accompaniment for which he was responsible. This

somewhat superficial article struck me as typical of the vast majority of the movie press, and the fantasy genre in particular, in their attitude towards the men whose names nearly always appear on the publicity posters but who remain somewhat enigmatic characters. There are always articles on directors in *Starburst* (and actors, and producers, and especially special effects) but never a mention of the men in the background whose finished product can either improve or degrade a final cut.

How, I wonder, would *Supergirl* fare without Jerry Goldsmith to back her up? Would *Jaws* still be as intense without John Williams' swimming melody? Would *The Right Stuff* be so had Bill Conti's Oscar-winning score not

aided in the lift-off? Maybe this attitude of neglect is fostered in the mistaken belief that nobody wants to know about film music, without doubt the most neglected variety of music on the airwaves. As far as I know, only Radio Medway has a programme featuring soundtrack music on Saturday afternoons, and that isn't much consolation to anyone outside Kent.

This attitude to serious film music does indeed seem to be shared by the big record companies; the soundtracks most commonly put on general release tend to involve mainly rock and pop style music, a variety not exactly rare on the shelves as it is. The *Ghostbusters* soundtrack featured very little of Bernstein's score, while the *Gremlins* LP had two songs on side one not even in

the film (I don't remember them in any case), while a piecemeal attempt at snatching from Goldsmith's wonderfully whimsical score is on side two, as if the producers were using this to pad out the album. It seems that whether a composer writes for 'establishment' films (whatever they are) or not, his very often strenuous efforts are largely ignored.

I know Mat Irvine occasionally reviews soundtrack releases in *Starburst*, and his criticisms are fair and well balanced, but would it be too much to ask for a regular feature on film music? There are always new soundtrack albums entering the market (despite the haphazard 'should-we-shouldn't-we' marketing techniques of record producers, even the usually excellent Varese Saraband label; witness the belated arrival of *Supergirl*), but there is a tremendous backlog of past soundtracks as any visit to record megastores will illustrate.

I hope this letter doesn't fall on (tone) deaf ears. It would not be fatuous to claim that some of the greatest music this century has started out on film soundtracks; Shostakovich's *The Gadfly*, Prokofiev's *Ivan the Terrible* and Lieutenant Kije, Vaughan Williams' *Scott of the Antarctic*, and Mikos Rozsa's *Last Embrace* are just some examples from a form of music in danger of dying out through negligence and slavish devotion to the whims of styleless fashion.

Andrew Field,
Padstow,
Cornwall.



Only the most refined and sophisticated musicians were employed to provide the music for *Return of the Jedi*.

A regular feature on film music? How does this idea sound to other readers? In the meantime, this issue Mat Irvine reviews some of the latest soundtrack releases in *Record World* (page 45).

THE PIG PEOPLE

This is to tell you of the significance *Starburst* has had in my

life. When issue 1 came out I was at college studying Interior Design but wishing, like so many hopeful kids, that I could be a special effects technician. Information was hard to get and your magazine kept me in touch with what was happening in the U.K. (all the other magazines were American).

I left college and worked as

an architectural model maker. It was the closest I could get to my dreams. Then I discovered that special effects were needed in the production of commercials (at that time Australian films had no S.F.X.). Thus started a new career of making specialised props for advertisements. Eventually I got work on feature films.

Your preview of *Razorback* was exciting for me as that was the first 'monster' film I worked on. As a member of the team responsible for constructing the pig (the inner mouth, teeth and legs are my most visible contributions), I am in a position to give credit where credit is due to the effects team behind the film.

The person who deserves all the credit for the difficult job of realising the pig in its many incarnations is Bob McCarron. His make-up work was a very secondary contribution compared to the effort of creating something that has never been seen in this country in terms of size or sophistication.

David Hardley and Jim Morphet created the internals for the running pig. Tad Pride and his brother Dave created the cable activated undershell for the pig. Nik Dorrington and myself carried out sculpture and external construction under Bob McCarron's guidance. Nik Dorrington is an excellent prosthetic make-up artist and was instrumental in producing the beast's foam latex flesh.

I find *Starburst* excellent in its coverage and I haven't missed an issue since those early days of dreaming.

Lewis P. Morley,
Leichhardt,
Australia.

FLICKERS by Tim Quinn & Dicky Howett

'YORKSHIRE SENTINEL' FILM CRITIC
EDWARD P. SLOTH GOES BEHIND THE
SCENES ON *STAR TREK 4* ...

SOTELL ME, WHAT'S GOING
ON HERE, LEOPOLD?

THAT'S LEONARD,
EDWIN. WELL IT'S
THE OLD STORY OF
GREED, LUST,
TREACHERY AND
BACK-STABBING...

ALL THE OLD HUMAN FOIBLES AND
VIRTUES ARE ONCE AGAIN PUT TO THE
TEST AS THE CREW OF THE *ENTERPRISE*

BAND TOGETHER
AGAINST THE
INJUSTICE OF
THE
GALACTIC
POWERS.

MARVELLOUS!
THANKS FOR
YOUR TIME, LAURENCE.

'STAR TREK: THE EXPOSE!
Actor LARRY NIMOY today
slammed the 'GALACTIC'
powers at Paramount for
their greed, treachery
and back-stabbing foibles..'



Only Crawley's • THINGS TO COME •

PETER SCAN?

The reasons for Steven Spielberg delaying his *Peter Pan* movie are becoming clearer. And certainly, most intriguing. According to my old and trusted mate, R. E. Liablesources, the reasons are twofold:

(a) Spielberg wants to make the film in harness with Disney. It could be said, he wants any film in harness with Disney, but this one most of all. Now that his *Raiders*' backer from Paramount, Mike Eisener, has the top Disney job, this hope could well become a distinct possibility. But everything, even backing or co-producing with the most successful film director in history takes time.

(b) Spielberg also wants to shoot the film in Doug Trumbull's amazing you-are-in-the-picture Showscan system. The drawback here is that no normal cinemas are equipped to take, let alone project, Showscan in the world... for the moment. Trumbull is trying to do something about that. If Spielberg let it be known *Peter Pan* would be in Showscan, I'd expect an immediate America reconstruction programme throughout America!

EURO-SCAN

Trumbull's Showscan (show-off) movies should be seen in Europe before the summer. That is, if the financial winds continue in the same direction... I hear there's a plan to show the movies in a special portable theatre in Cannes during the May 8-20 festival, in a boost to sell them and the system to this side of the globe. But the films – two, so far, including Christopher Lee in the 22-minute Mr. Magic – could have already opened in Paris before then.



STEVEN'S HAT TRICK

St. Spielberg has pulled off a remarkable hat-trick... He's made the No. 1 film of all time (*E.T.*, where you been?) and now, not only is

Raiders of the Lost Ark the No. 1 film on tape (indeed the best-selling of any tapes), it's also the first cassette to bust through the million sales barrier. Took less than a year, too, to sell that million-plus copies.

AMBLIN'S FUTURE

Now, to the Spielberg production I knew nothing about last month... I've done a little digging, never easy the way Amblin tends to keep all cards close to its corporate chest, and now I know a little more. Just a little...

Back To The Future, which sounds a time travel number (don't quote me, okay?), marks a reunion after five years between St. Steven and the duo from 1941, *I Wanna Hold Your Hand* and *Used Cars* – The Two Bobs, Gale and Zemeckis. They wrote the scenario, Bob Gale is co-producing with Neil Canton and Robert Zemeckis is directing. This is his first outing since editing his *Romancing The Stone* hit meant he had to pass up on *Cocoon*. Ex-Carpenter man Dean Cundey is on camera and the (young) cast comprises Eric Stoltz, Christopher Lloyd, Lea Thomas and Crispin Glover.



A candid shot of director Steven Spielberg chatting to Kate Capshaw on the set of *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom*. Left: Effects wizard Douglas Trumbull, creator of Showscan.

Shooting began in L.A. on November 26, and Universal will open the film, Stateside, on June 21.

ENEMY MINE

Also starting – or reactivating – on November 26 was *Enemy Mine*, the long shuttered SF movie starring the *Jaws* 3D couple, Dennis Quaid and Lou Gossett, Jr. As reported before, West German Wolfgang Peterson has taken over control of the saga from fast exiting director Richard Loncraine. After the opening days' location on the Canary isle of Lanzarote, the unit went back to Peterson's home, Bavaria Studios in Munich, where he shot *The Neverending Snooze*. He will occupy seven of the nine soundstages there for a spell. The largest stage (at 2,310 sq. metres, it's claimed to be the largest in Europe – but they all say that), production designer Rolf Zehetbauer (the *Cabaret* Oscar winner) has built an entire volcanic planet full of glaciers, forest (petrified, what else?), carnivores, meteor storms and – like the end of 2010 – two suns.



A scene from *Jaws 3-D* featuring Dennis Quaid (front left) and Louis Gossett, Jr. the stars of Wolfgang Peterson's forthcoming *Enemy Mine*.

CARTOONBERGER

Spielberg's animation plans with Don Bluth are far from aborted. Or so I hear. Their project is about to go, as a tele-movie in America and a cinema feature elsewhere. I gather it's called *Miss Liberty*, and covers the adventures (or should one say the ms. adventures) of the State of Liberty.

SANTA CLOSED

A lot can happen in a month. Or less. Since last month's news about Americana mums being up in arms and out on the streets protesting about the *Silent Night, Deadly Night* horror quickie with a Santa type as a kind of axeman killer, the film has been shuttered, pulled, withdrawn, cancelled, closed or indeed clawed... Tri-Star, the same company due to release the Salkinds' *Santa Claus*, lived with the heavy publicity flak for a time, and even changed their trailers and tele-commercials. (Well, it did make about two million green ones in ten days.) Thereafter, though, what with all the street demos, business plummeted by 45% and Tri-Star threw in the towel.

It doesn't end there, though. The film's producer, Ira Richard Barmack, is hoping to buy the movie back from the distributors and bake himself a new deal elsewhere. Sure, it's a controversial number, he says, but how can it harm the Santa clan, since they're too young to get into see it.

What he didn't say, not wanting to remind other distributors what they had on their shelves, was that no one kicked up such an almighty fuss the last time a guy dressed as Santa went on the rampage. That was five years ago in Ed Pressman's production of *You'd Better Watch Out*, known in some quarters as *Christmas Evil*.



Karen Allen and Jeff Bridges in a wonderful scene from John Carpenter's *Starman*, due for release here in May.

KOREAN CAULDRON

They're beginning to call him Mickey Louse at Disney. The family atmosphere at Uncle Walt's studio is rocking 'n' reeling since the new bosses made a five per cent cut in staff and for the first

time since *Tron* (which old boss Ron Miller promised was 'the last time'), some animation work has been farmed out to cheaper artists in Korea. In all, some 50,000 cels for *The Black Cauldron* are being painted in Korea for the summer premiere deadline.

SHY SHEENA

Pals, who have tried, tell me Tanya Roberts just won't anymore. Talk about Sheena, that is. I can hardly blame her. The film is so rotten-awful-lousy-bad, it makes *Dream One* look good! I was hardly anticipating anything as magnificently ponderous as *Greystoke*, but the film Tanya fought to star in, that Paul Aratow toiled so many years to set up, would be laughed off the screen by five-year-olds at a Saturday matinee. On a scale of 1-10, the film's acting, script, direction, it's very pace and bravura rates something in the order of minus-239.

At least, I learned something about Will Eisner and S. M. Iger's old heroine (well, she is 48 now). Sheena's real name is Janet. And what we have here, friends, is *Jungle Janet*, *The Beastmistress*. Having failed lamentably in his *Pink Panther* comedy, Ted Wass is no better in what passes here for adventure. Sheena, the kiddy, looks like a refugee from a nappy commercial. Sheena, the woman, aka Tanya, looks a fish out of water. Overall, though, she looks like an Eileen Ford model on a safari holiday, instead of an orphaned kiddy, raised to maturity in the jungle of Togora by a tribe who, very handily, speak English with just the trace of a Berlitz mid-Atlantic accent.

HITCH CONTINUES

The successful revival of those five 'missing' Hitchcock films has really started something... odd. Universal says it's reshooting five of The Master's TV series films (1955-61) to form a big telemovie. They're keeping the original Hitch introductions, though they'll be coloured by computer.

I'm all for seeing more Hitchcock. But this doesn't seem the right way to go about it. I've seen most of the old series on French TV lately, and they still stand up. So why not colour them, if they must, instead of remaking them. After all, it was the original 'missing' five that earned \$37 million this year, not some quickie retreads directed by guys not worthy of being Hitch's gofers.

STARMAN

Despite transformation magic from Dick Smith, Stan Winston and Rick Baker, our Tom Conti can stop worrying about losing the film he wanted to make. *Starman* is even more hollow than *Dune*. (What has happened to John Carpenter these days? He used to be such a wiz.) Jeff Bridges has the role Conti eyed, an E.T. taking on human form (the body of Karen Allen's dead hubby, in fact). But just why this alien is visiting us, why he has to return and from this one spot far from where he landed is never explained. In fact, the holes in the screenplay are wide enough for Helen Mirren to drive the *Leonov* and *Discovery* through. Sideways.

LOST NIGHTMARES

Whatever happened to William Friedkin's *Nightmares* movie? I wish I knew. It was planned as a horrorshow compilation, and rather better than a bunch of clips strung together as in the *Terror in the Aisles* number. Friedkin has dug up extras for more international than purely American horrors. He'd also filmed interviews with people like Sir Alfred Hitchcock. Busy as he is, Friedkin ought to finish it. If only for cassettes.

GREAT DEAL

William Friedkin is avoiding legal hassles by a most unusual deal regarding his next assignments: *To Live And Die In L.A.* featuring Dune's treacherous Dr Yueh, Dean Stockwell, and *Judgement Day*, adapted from the novel by Bob Lan-

caster and B. C. Hall. Billy's contract, more iron-clad than that for *The Exorcist*, stipulates he'll wind up owning half of the negative of both films. As the pair will cost \$17 million to shoot, let alone their later box office and resale value, he's doing very nicely.

R.I.P.

It was, perhaps, apt that Gilbert Verschoten broke the news to me that his friend, John Gilling, had died at 74 in Madrid. While attending Gilbert's first Brussels Fantasy Fest in 1983, I'd met John and his actress-wife Lorraine Clewes for the last time. John's remembered, naturally, as one of the better Hammer film-makers, though his Hammer output was sparse. With reason, I suppose, as he was forever in the shade of Terence Fisher. Gilling, though, had a great panache for our genre, whether in rescuing something as fundamentally asinine as *Mother Riley Meets The Vampire* (1952), *The Night Caller*, aka *Blood Beast From Outer Space* (1966) or the movie that bred

ony Crawley's •THINGS TO COME•

► the Gilling cult, *The Shadow of the Cat* (1961).

He entered movies as an assistant director in 1933 and began scripting after his wartime Royal Navy service. He won his directing spurs with *Escape From Broadmoor* in 1948, continuing with a batch of quickie crime thrillers, while still writing for himself and other directors. Cubby Broccoli and Irving Allen gave him a Warwick contract in 1956, resulting in four films until 1959, including *Idle On Parade* which made a star of the man who'd rescued all previous Warwick adventure romps — Tony Newley. Although he'd already made both the *Mother Riley* number and *The Gamma People* (1956), it was *The Flesh And The Fiends* (1960) which launched Gilling into the genre. He increased his following with his trilogy, *The Plague of the Zombies*, *The Reptile* (both 1966) and his fourth Hammer film, *The Mummy's Shroud* (1967). He moved to Spain in 1970 where he made his final film, *La Cruz de Diablo* in 1974 and devoted his time to painting and completing his, as yet unpublished, autobiography, *Gilling Graffiti*.

ENTER: THE JETSONS

After Superman/girl, Flash, Buck, Hulk, Tarzan, Sheena and Batman, Dick Tracy and Mandrake to come, Hollywood has not yet run out of cartoon heroes to turn into live-actioners. Latest entry is Hanna-Barbera's galactic version of *The Flintstones* — *The Jetsons*. Paramount, the Indy and *Star Trek* home, is planning a movie of this whacky family for the big screen after some, twenty-odd (very odd) years as an animation show on the tube. Eric Luke was set to finish his scenario in January



ready for a Spring shoot. I'm not sure if we're supposed to cheer. What's next? *Astro Boy Meets Jonny Quest*...

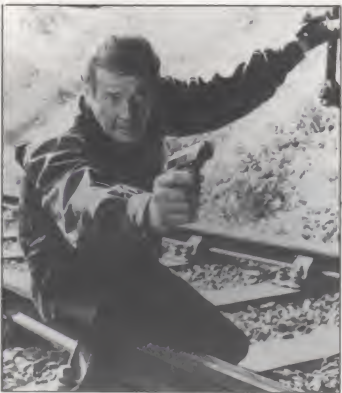
CLARKE VISION

Yorkshire TV is planning a series of *World's Greatest Mysteries*, introduced weekly by HAL's dad, Arthur C. Clarke. He co-hosted the pilot or test show with George C. Scott. Nothing that new; it even included the Loch Ness monster. Clarke's new book, by the by, is *The Promise of Space*, a factual account of the early space-travel years, plus all the problems (technical, economical and political) involved. Sounds like a good TV series in that. Too late, Arthur — Martin Sheen has trumped you. He narrates *Spaceflight*, a telehistory coming our way soon.

BAD SEED'S BACK

Dino De Lumpkin's love affair with our genre seems to be ending... Oh sure he's still concerned with *Red Sonja* and

Steve King's *Silver Bullet*. He has hopes for *Conan III* (but not, I suspect, any *Dune II*). He's still chatting up the Russians about *King Kong In Moscow*, but is getting on rather better with the Chinese for *Tai Pan*. And that's it? Could be. For despite his love and adoration for little Drew Barrymore, he's let *The Bad Seed* slip his grasp. The 1956 movie is being remade for TV instead. *The Bad Seed* (directed by Mervyn LeRoy and No. 208 in the *Starburst Fantasy Film Chart* last time around) was about the first of the child-as-killer movies, with pig-tailed, nine-year-old blonde Patty McCormick offing most of the cast.



007 STAGE II

Roger Mogue and Co., christened the all new 007 Stage at Pinewood studios in December for the final two weeks of *A View To A Kill*. The old stage, built to accommodate the subs for *The Spy Who Loved Me* (1976), and said to be the largest stage in Europe (where have I heard that before?), was razed by a mystery fire last year. The new stage, said to be the largest in the world (oh yeah?), certainly has what must be the largest water-tank — 8ft deep and 350ft by 74ft. When Cubby builds himself a pool, he builds himself a pool!

TERROR TALES

America's HBO cable-tv network has almost inevitably entered the "journeys into the unknown" anthology genre. Their series is *The Hitchhiker*. Paige Fletcher plays the fella. Every hitch, another story. They range from having the screen's Charley Manson, Steve Railsback, among Petty Thieves, Karen Black having trouble with *The Hired Help*, *Star Trek*ie Stephen Collins in *And If We Have Dreams*, lovely Penny Milford suffering a *Man At The Window* and even Klaus Kinski joined the party for *Lovesounds*. Will there be any tales left for Spielberg's series?



PHANTOM ARISES

Coming to London soon *The Phantom of the Opera*. No, not a new film. Nor even one of the three (Lon Chaney, Claude Rains, Herbert Lom) old films, or four if we count Brian De Pal-

ma's rock version. This time it's the real stage musical version with Charles Gounod's operatic score. Staging the show are Cameron Mackintosh and Mr (soon to be Sir?) West End, himself, Andrew Lloyd Webber.

ITALIANIMATION!

Italy's leading TV network, Rai, would appear to be declaring war on Japan by spending \$10 million on animation shows. Not a bit of it. The Japanese will get most of the money. They'll be making the programmes – who else? The first seven include *Sherlock The Hunter* (sounds far from Holmes, sweet Holmes), *T & One*, about a mermaid (the Italians are the greatest rip-off merchants), *The Adventures of the Black Pirate* and – best of the bunch – 26 half-hours of Hugo Pratt's comic-strip legend, *Corto Maltese*.



GONE BUT NOT...

forgotten! Tony Daniels hasn't finished his Threepio career yet. He turned up in his golden clobber for Disney's special *Donald Duck's 50th Birthday* (TV) Show. 'Twas not as much fun as it should have been. Too many non-Disneysesque guests. I mean what the duck has Henry Winkler, Kenny Rogers, Donna Summer got to do with Donald's life? Even Andy Warhol and R2-D2 ambled into the act – difficult at times to tell the difference between those two. Dick Van Dyke, who has, at least, made a couple of Disney movies, hosted the birthday bash. And apart from all the Donald clips, the only VIP guest was Clarence Nash – the voice of the orneriest duck in history.

LIGHTS...

Don Bluth is getting Euro-aid to help finance his third video game. Next? Oh he has thirty more in the wings, but these are more educational and for home not arcade use... At age 57, Roderick Andrew Anthony Jude McDowall, better known to us

as Roddy, gets back to our genre in *Fright Night*... Shoestring budget or not, Thom Eberhardt's *Night of the Comet* has been doing crackerjack business over yonder. It's a *Close Encounters* – with laughs. Of the witty, not Lampoon kind... Pat McGoonan on his way to Broadway in the *Pack of Lies* play... Our other favourite Mac, Darren McGavin should be heading that zany Indiana brood again in Bob Clark's sequel to *A Christmas Story*, which was one of the genuine surprises of the last movie year... *Mutant* kid Lee Montgomery dropping fantasy flix now he's discovered *Girls Just Want To Have Fun*... *Mutant*, meantime, seems the reason why Film Ventures International has fallen into bankruptcy. No one at the company wanted to make it except the boss, Edward Montoror – and he's not been seen in his office for months...

CAMERA...

P.J. Soles joins Jessica Lange and *Right Stuff*—er Ed Harris in *Sweet Dreams*, the country and western biopic of Patsy Cline, after wrapping *Listen To The City* in Canada. Gets around does P.J. Her last movie was shot in Australia... Richard Kobritz, who produced Steve King's *Salem's Lot* and John Carpenter's *Someone Is Watching Me* for the American tube, has a new tele-chiller called, well, *Chiller*. About a guy taken out of the fridge after ten years of suspended animation (and no, Mandy, I don't mean he's been on strike at Disney)... Star of the smash-hit Sydney production of *The Little Shop of Horrors* is Christopher Pate, son of the locally-born Hollywood heavy Michael Pate, last seen in our genre alongside Vincent Price in *Tower of London* (1962). Runs in the family, huh?

AKK-SHUN!

Lord Lucas strikes back! He's reissuing *Return of the Jedi* in America from March 29... Novelisation of John Carpenter's latest mishap, *Starman*, is by – who else but three of the best rewriters in the business, Alan Dean Foster... Conan II's Olivia D'Albo has joined Paul (*Prom Night*) Lynch's Toronto movie, *Flying*. Subject? Gymnastics, the '85 version of 84's breakdancin' gimmick... Kathleen Beller who enlivened *Dynasty* for a while, tries spookier TV with *Ouija*. Doug Trumbull won an award at a retrospective of his SPFX work in 2001, *CE3K*, *Blade Runner* etc., at the Chicago festival... Peter Hyams comes down to earth after 2010 with *Running Scared*, about a pair of New York cops. Like Butch and Sundance in blue, or so I'm told... Robert Wise returns to directing for the first time since *Star Trek*, *The Motionless Picture*, with *Finders Keepers*... Spielberg's lady, Amy Irving, comes into her own (at last) with the best reviews of her career for *Micki and Maude*, in which she's one of bigamist Dudley Moore's two wives...



Walt Disney are celebrating the 50th anniversary of Donald Duck (seen here with Scrooge McDuck from Mickey's Christmas Carol). Happy Birthday, Donald!

LAST WORD

Can't leave this month without quoting one of the better film historians around, David Shipman. In his *Story of Cinema* book, he actually says that Lucas and Spielberg 'are doing their medium a profound disservice'. Funny. I thought they were keeping it alive!



In 1968 Stanley Kubrick and Arthur C. Clarke produced a film that is still regarded by many as a masterpiece, and at the time set the prevailing simplistic attitude towards cinematic SF on its head. The film was of course, **2001: A Space Odyssey**. Ten years later, screen-time, **2010** is a sequel of great expectations. **Richard Holliss** looks at the new movie by Peter Hyams.

"The film is about our world and our ability to live in peace," claims producer, director and screenwriter Peter Hyams. It could be his philosophy for audiences still somewhat confused over the messages of the first film, *2001: A Space Odyssey* made 18 years ago, and because Hyams is certainly no stranger to science fiction. His previous credits have included *Capricorn One*, *Outland* and *The Star Chamber*. However, he originally had no desire to become involved with the *2010* project. And it's quite possible that in Hollywood, most film directors would have felt the same way. After all, the long awaited sequel from Arthur C. Clarke was widely read and acclaimed when it was first published a couple of years ago. Hyams was concerned that *2001*, whether you loved it or hated it, was a difficult act to follow and audiences would immediately draw comparisons between both productions.

He changed his mind, however, when he read Clarke's novel in early 1983. "I found a notion that was so wonderful, so startling... it was the notion of making contact with life beyond our plane." What, perhaps, impressed Hyams even more was Clarke's ability, as an author, to try out fantasy concepts while remaining faithful to scientific fact. A rare accomplishment in the general plethora of science fiction writing, and an almost impossible task, it seems, for most filmmakers.

More importantly, Hyams felt that here was an opportunity to make a very different film to *2001*. "If you have a



Left: The three American astronauts of the spacecraft *Discovery*. From the top: Heywood Floyd (Roy Scheider), R. Chandra (Bob Balaban) and Walter Curnow (John Lithgow). Right: The publicity art of the *Starchild* from Jupiter.



chance to tell a wonderful story, it's worth almost anything" he said. The biggest problem he had to face was the film's deadline. Frank Yablans, vice Chairman of MGM/UA Entertainment, who first persuaded Hyams to undertake the film, gave the green light for production to begin mid-1983. That gave Hyams just under a year and a half to complete *2010* for a Christmas '84 release in America. *2010* had taken nearly five years and had pioneered some inventive special effects techniques. *2010*, with the aid of state of the art effects, would have to look as good in a quarter of the time.

EMPHASIS ON CHARACTERISATION

The major difference between the films was the fact that Kubrick made *2001* as a 'cold, clinical study of future space travel'. All the people in his film seemed to move at a slower pace, more relaxed, dwarfed by the film's technical wizardry. Hyams was convinced that *2010* was about characterisation more than hardware, and he peopled his film with characters who argue, raise their

voices, and react more like the modern space traveller of recent space epics. Where Kubrick painted a picture of mankind tentatively traversing the solar system, Hyams shows us a mankind who is already bored with space travel. A fate that actually befell the Apollo moon missions in the early seventies.

Hyams did not, however, neglect special effects in preference to the human story. He took great pains to utilise spacecraft in the film that hurtled around the planets of our Solar System, either sheathed in flames or catapulting through space. In fact his interpretation ►



Above: The crew of the Russian spacecraft Leonov, headed by Tanya Kirbuk (Helen Mirren). Left: Floyd comforts cosmonaut Irina Yakunina (Natasha Schneider). Below: The space walk!



was to be more of a space fantasy adventure, with a race against time to escape destruction, than Kubrick's more logical handling of interstellar travel.

AUTHORIAL APPROVAL

Hyams, the screenwriter, was very concerned that Clarke should approve his treatment of the book. He knew that Clarke was a respected storyteller, and was therefore more than pleased when the author enthusiastically set up a communications link between Hyams' Culver City office and his home in Sri Lanka, thousands of miles away. This was a perfect wedding of ideas. If Hyams was at all concerned about any changes or deletions needed in the film, he could quickly contact Clarke to discuss them via their computer link. "He (Clarke) is a natural resource, a geyser of knowledge. He also understood the kind of alterations that were being made and I think

he understood the spirit they were made in. He was a delight, warm and wonderful, and he understood the process."

2001 had a very specific impact on me . . . It was as if Stanley Kubrick had sent a note to anybody who wanted to make a film. It said: *There is nothing you can't do.*

Hyams

On the first day of production, Clarke, who had only recently read Hyams' completed screenplay, sent a message to the director: "The screenplay arrived this morning. . . I felt like playing a few tricks on you — like a message from my secretary that I was last seen heading for the airport carrying a gun. But being the day it is and the delicate condition you are in, I'll say right away that it's a splendid job and you have brilliantly chiselled out the basic elements of the novel, besides adding quite a few of your own. I laughed and cried in all the right places."





Above: A tense moment for Curnow on the outside of the spacecraft. **Left:** Dave Bowman (Keir Dullea), the astronaut who first made the trip to Jupiter in 2001. **Right:** Bowman takes a walk through the Discovery.



BRENNER & MEAD INC.

Throughout production, Hyams worked closely with a design team headed by Albert Brenner and visual conceptualist Syd Mead. Brenner's film credits range from *Capricorn One* to *The Goodbye Girl*. He designed the interior compartment of the Russian spacecraft *Leonov* and supervised the rebuilding of some of the original 2001 sets. Syd Mead, whose past credits include designs for *Star Trek: The Motion Picture*, *Los Angeles in Bladerunner* and the vehicles in *Tron*, was responsible for drawing up both the exterior and interiors of the *Leonov*. Although the film begins with a lengthy prologue set on Earth, Hyams was able to use such impressive locations as the huge Array Radio Telescope in New Mexico and the Whitehouse in Washington.

The spacecraft that, ten years after the events of 2001, carries the American and Russian scientists to Jupiter, is Soviet

built and piloted. It was Hyams' desire that the *Leonov* should be a more functional craft in appearance, so Mead filled the interior with the most detailed switching panels, lighting boards and crew accommodation, including hibernation chambers, medical bays, airlocks, a galley and E.V.A. equipment. In its exterior form, the *Leonov* is simple in design, but intriguing due to its revolving centrifuge, creating an artificial gravity.

Perhaps Brenner's hardest task was the reconstruction of the sets from the first film, most notably the airlock corridors, Hal 9000's interior and the pod bay. Also a scale model of the 700 ft long *Discovery* had to be rebuilt from studying enlargements of 70 mm film frames, as all the original blueprints and plans had long since been destroyed or secreted into private collections. Information was also harder to pin down because 2010 was made entirely in Hollywood, unlike 2001 which was filmed at MGM's studios outside London.



I draw a film before I write it. Then I draw it again in storyboard fashion before I shoot. My style is to work from the image.

Hyams

► Hyams knew that 2010 had the benefit of the tremendous upheaval in special effects work since 2001 first appeared on

our screens. To handle the miniatures required for the film, he enlisted the aid of four times Academy Award winner Richard Edlund, and his Boss Film Company (BFC). Edlund recreated a huge moving image of Jupiter and utilised the blue-flux front screen projection system, the largest of its kind in the world, to film live action elements for many of the special effects sequences. In a particular

scene, one of the film's stars takes his first spacewalk, and the technique added a great deal of tension and unexpected realism to an accepted SF cinema cliché. The *Leonov* and *Discovery* sets were constructed on two of Culver City Studio lot's largest soundstages. Ninety per cent of the production schedule was completed in Hollywood, with only one week of location filming.





"MY GOD. IT'S FULL OF STARS"

But just as important to Hyams, was the impressive cast list. Unlike Kubrick, who had employed unknown faces in 2001 (a matter of cost as well as anonymity), Hyams was able to acquire the talents of Roy Scheider as Dr Heywood Floyd, John Lithgow as scientist Walter Curnow, Helen Mirren as Russian Cosmonaut Tanya Kirbuk, Bob Balaban as Dr R. Chandra and Keir Dullea, returning in his role as astronaut Dave Bowman.

Scheider, Oscar nominee for *All That Jazz*, is perfect in the part of Dr Floyd (originally played in 2001 by William Sylvester), and ably supported by his eminent co-stars. Dullea found his return in the part of Bowman a very strange experience, especially wandering around the newly constructed *Discovery* set in an identical spacesuit to the one he wore before. With such a talented team behind him, Hyams bought the film in on schedule, and it opened in America prior to Christmas '84, unfortunately to a less than enthusiastic response.

So the question that will be on most people's minds as they visit the cinema to see *2010* is, will it be as good as the first film? That all depends. Certainly Arthur C. Clarke still has a few tricks up his sleeve, but the impact of witnessing the cold black *monolith*, the huge *Discovery* spaceship and the *Starchild* has gone. Instead Hyams has settled for the human element and chooses to ignore some of Clarke's more spectacular sub-plots. In this way the film does retain some of the mystery of the first, and fortunately, isn't as irritatingly thought provoking. However, it doesn't have the advantage

of Kubrick's better musical score (*Thus Sprach Zarathustra* and *Lux Aeterna* are included), the sweeping grandeur or, for those who can remember it, the giant Cinerama screen. But for all that, it does come across as a more satisfying story, and I rather liked the inference that sordid Whitehouse politics had originally turned Hal into a murderer in 2001, and not some divine intervention.

Bob Balaban is good in the role of Hal's creator, hoping to learn why his computer malfunctioned, and there is only one sequence involving the scientist that is completely illogical, but you'll see what I mean. Of the Russian crew, Max, played by Elya Baskin is the most believable

character. A sort of Steven Spielberg lookalike, he later meets a nasty end instigated, accidentally, by the Soviet crew, reminding us that, unlike in the book, the Communists are still a cold, calculating bunch of people. This applies to the situation on Earth when we discover that even in 25 years time the cold war between the super powers is still in danger of hotting up.

"A WONDERFUL THING"

As a token gesture to 2001, Dave Bowman reincarnates as the astronaut, the old man and the *Starchild* to explain to Floyd about the "wonderful thing" that is about to happen. He also finds time to dart across the Solar System dropping in on his mother and widow in order to say goodbye to them for the last time. Apart from failing to explain why he exists in this state at all, Hyams has the opportunity in these touching scenes to indulge in one or two in-jokes from the first film.

Without giving away the dimax of the picture, it must be said that it's quite a surprise and the most awesome special effect in the entire film, even given the opportunity of yet another sequel. I'm still dubious though, as to Arthur C. Clarke's scientific knowledge at the denouement, and as to whether such a transference of mass into energy is possible, without upsetting the delicate balance of the planets. But even so, *2010* is great entertainment. It's not 2001, but then you can usually count on the fingers of one hand films where the sequels have been better, and it's a worthy successor to the first. After all, we as an audience deserve an answer to Kubrick's grand dream, and for my money Peter Hyams could have done a lot worse.



Top: Dr. Chandra begins the dangerous process of bringing the HAL 9000 computer back to life from within its brain vault.

TALES FROM THE DARKSIDE



You are now leaving The Twilight Zone, please prepare yourself for George Romero's Tales from the Darkside. Tony Crawley reports on the master of the living dead's new role in resurrecting TV fantasy to its prime-time place.

Grandpa Tolliver is dead, but he won't lie down. An adulterous couple plan to murder hubby. . . An older couple, celebrating their 43rd wedding anniversary, prepare a rather special menu. . . The apartment next door is haunted; so's the phone. . . Teenage twins imprint a dead spirit on their computer. . . An amateur warlock is out for vengeance. . . There's this girl called Pru who just never stops weeping. . . And an alcoholic who

can't recognise his own son. . .

Welcome to *The Twili*. . . (excuse me!) to the *Darkside* of George Romero!

Romero's Laurel Entertainment combine — the adopted home of the living dead! — in conjunction with fellow executive producers Richard Rubenstein and Jerry Gold have come up with their answer to Rod Serling's classic series. *Tales from the Darkside* was shown on U.S. TV in late 1984, and already looks like a winner.

Not so surprising, as the *Tales* have been written by such exponents of the short chiller as Robert (Psycho) Bloch, Harlan (U.N.C.L.E.) Ellison, David (Star Trek) Gerrold and... ah! but of course, Romero's buddy (and now, apparently, Spielberg's too), Stephen King!

FAMILIAR FACES OF TERROR

Some of the star names involved in the dark proceedings – shot in either Los Angeles or New York, as Pittsburg was filled with the living-dead – are a couple of old Hitchcock hands. Tippi Hedren, from *The Birds* (1963) and *Marnie* (1964), plays the mother of the computer twins, *Mookie & Pookie* – one's dead. Maybe. The other Hitch star is Farley Granger. He's the family doctor with a bizarre *Painkiller* – somewhat older than when we saw him, aged 23, as one of the killers in *Rope* (1948) last year.

Our own Jean Marsh, who had enough problems *Upstairs, Downstairs*, has them next door with a haunted flat in *Answer Me*; it seems a fit punishment for the wicked witch of Walter Murch's *Oz* sequel. Jessica Harper, from Romero mate Dario Argento's *Suspiria* (1976), is the tearful Pru. Bud Cort, forever *Harold*, particularly to *Maunder*, is the warlock in *Snip, Snip*. Keenan Wynn says *I'll Give You A Million* for a fellow millionaire's soul. And *Dreamscape*'s David Patrick Kelly has a memorable role as the fella ceasing to exist in *Slippage*.

Then, there's various tele-veterans on hand like Vince Edwards, Stuart Whitman and Eddie Bracken (he's the grandpa refusing to give up the ghost). Jean Peters' daughter, Kelly, is in the first tale, *The New Man*. And others feature Joe Dante's Cormanite lucky charm, Dick Miller... Joe Turkel, *The Shining*'s barman... and Fritz Weaver gets back to Romero-Tom Savini country for *Inside The Closet*, something of a sequel to *The Crate* from their *Creepshow* meeting.

TRIED AND NEW TALENTS

Until we get to see *Tales From The Darkside* – as yet, there's no news that either the BBC or ITV or even Channel 4 has bought, or has even heard of the series – it is the show's scenarists and directors which demand our attention. They make an intriguing bunch of tried, tested talent and a whole slew of novitiates.

Among the aforementioned writers such as Bloch, Ellison, Gerrold etc, only David Gerrold has actually supplied scripts (*If The Shoe Fits*, and *Levitation*). The rest of the scribes, of stories or scripts, are familiar to subscribers to all the usual best magazines for short stories: *Playboy*, *Twilight Zone Magazine*, *Fantasy and Science Magazine*, *Omni*, *Esquire*, *Analog*, *Amazing* and *Alfred Hitchcock's Mystery Magazine*.

Obviously the major events of the *Darkside* series are Tom Savini's directing



Left: Trick or Treat for malevolent miser Gideon Hackies? Barnard Hughes in the pilot movie for the series. Above: "Agghh!" An immortal line from Lou Jacobi in *Painkiller*...

debut with *Inside The Closet*, and the version of Stephen King's last published short story, *Word Processor*, starring Bruce Davison. The story for one and the script of the other, plus two other scripts, come from the most praised writer on this series, Michael McDowell. Who praises him? Well, only Stephen King and Peter Straub: "He is the finest writer of paperback originals in America," says King. "One of the absolutely best writers of horror in this or any other country," adds Straub. No wonder he was chosen to adapt King's fiendish electronic tale.

So far, Michael McDowell is known as a best-selling novelist. He's the writer responsible for *The Amulet*, *Cold Moon Over Babylon* and *The Elementals*. He has also beaten Tom Wolfe to reviving Charles Dickens' idea of the serial novel with his latest work, *Blackwater* – published in six parts: *The Flood*, *The Levee*, *The House*, *The War*, *The Fortune* and *Rain*.

George Romero did not direct any of his television comeback (he used to make commercials and sports specials in Pittsburg before resurrecting the dead). He was, of course, otherwise engaged in a little matter entitled *Day of the Dead*. He did, though,

write the pilot show, a Halloween special called *Trick Or Treat*, which led to his series being taken up by the Lexington Broadcast Services (LBS) for more than a hundred local TV stations throughout the United States.

Romero's hand is plainly visible in the choice of his 17 directors for the 24 tele-plays. They range from workmanlike B-horror makers like Armand Mastroianni (*He Knows You're Alone*; 1980) and Frank DePalma (*The Hibakusha Gallery*), and returning veterans (like John Hayes, back on the box after five years), to, perhaps, the next decade's movie-brats – found in the field of shorts, documentaries and industrial films, or direct from film schools or similar tuition.

Romero signalled this path of giving fresh folk a break from the outset when he called up Bob Balaban, the *Close Encounters* and 2010 actor, to direct his own *Trick Or Treat* pilot movie. Once the series won its backing from LBS, Romero was able to offer similar chances to four of his own aides, plus a couple of writers whose scripts he and his partner Richard Rubenstein had already optioned as potential Laurel Entertainment movies.

Well that's some of the background. Now ▶



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EPISODE GUIDE

Trick or treat (Pilot movie)

Script: George A. Romero. **Producer:** David E. Vogel. **Director:** Bob Balaban. **Cast:** Barnard Hughes as Gideon Hackles, I.M. Hobson, Max Wright, Joe Ponazeki, Knowl Johnson, Brenda Cur-
rin, Victor and Timmy Muldoon.

Malevolent miser Gideon Hackles exploits 1940's farming poor, encouraging them to shop on credit at his general store. Each Halloween, he orders their kids to his spooky house. If they can find their parents' IOUs, all debts are off! All they find are monstrous beasts created by Gideon to scare 'em off. But this year, once the kids have fled, Gideon gets his. He's visited by a witch, a ghost and a resurrected pirate (Frances Chaney, Ed French, Bill McNulty).

This was the pilot movie for the series, first screened in 1983, then again as fifth in the 1984 series format. Both times on - when else? - Halloween.

All a clone by the telephone

Script: Haskell Barkin. **Producer:** T.J. Castronova. **Director:** Frank DePalma. **Cast:** Harry Anderson as Leon, Dick Miller, Tom Newman, Marci Barkin, David Eastman.

Aspiring TV writer Leon is helpless when his telephone answering machine - 'I'm your alternate universe' - takes over his life, leaving its own messages for callers, insulting and proposing to Leon's girl and starting relationships with other message machines. It also writes scripts; but not this one.

Anniversary dinner

Story: D.J. Pass. **Script:** James Houghton. **Producer:** T.J. Castronova. **Director:** John Strysik. **Cast:** Alice Ghostly, Mario Roccuzzo, Fredrica Duke, Michael Cedar.

A retired couple celebrate 43 years' marriage by preparing their favourite menu. Ingredients include: one, young, female hitch-hiker. Just hop into the hot tub, m'dear. .!

Answer me

Story: Michael McDowell, D.W. Schuetz. **Script:** Michael McDowell. **Producer:** William Teitler. **Director:** Richard Friedman. **Cast:** Jean Marsh.



Harry Anderson as TV writer Leon (above) unusual problems with his answering machine in *All a Clone by the Telephone*.

An actress sub-lets a New York apartment and has problems with her neighbour's incessant phone. Except... the flat next door has been empty since the tenant was somehow strangled to death. And the phone is disconnected.

Bigalow's last smoke

Story: Craig Mitchell, Kenneth Hanis. **Script:** Michael McDowell. **Director:** Timna Ranon. **Cast:** Richard Romanus, Sam Anderson as Dr Synapsis.

Heavy smoker Bigalow (60 a day) awakes in a smokaholic's prison cell, watched by TV cameras and smoke-detectors - all part of Dr Synapsis' bizarre plans to help Bigalow quit the weed.

A case of the stubborn

Story: Robert Bloch. **Script:** James Houghton. **Producer:** William Teitler. **Director:** Jerry Smith. **Cast:** Eddie Bracken as Grandpa, Barbara Eda Young, Christian Slater, Brent Spiner, Bill McCutcheon.

Grandpa Tolliver is dead but he won't admit it. He still wants his catfish-'n' grits, a jug to swig and to just sit, watching the world pass by. No matter what family, doctor, preacher (even the undertaker) say, he refuses to give up his spirit. Until young Jody calls on the local Voodoo Woman (Tresa Hughes).

Djinn, no chaser

Story: Harlan Ellison. **Script:** Haskell Barkin. **Producer:** T.J. Castronova. **Director:** Shelley Levinson. **Cast:** Kareem Abdul Jabbar as Jan Bin Jan, Charles Levin, Colleen Camp, Nate Esformes.

Newlyweds are terrorised by the occupant of their antique oil-lamp. Barbara Eden, it ain't. No Jeannie, but a djinn - and a real lad insane after 10,000 years' imprisonment. He attacks the couple with hailstones, thunder, vermin, stalactites, vines, slimy fungus on their food, man-eating tigers at their door.

The false prophet

Story: Larry Fulton. **Script:** Julie Selbo. **Producer:** William Teitler. **Director:** Jerry Smith. **Cast:** Ronce Blakey, Justin Dealey.

Cassie Pines leaves Iowa for the South and the Sagittarian man of her dreams, on the advice of her electronic fortune-teller, Madame X. What she finds isn't exactly a match made by heaven, tarot, tea-leaves or Cassie's lucky penny. .

Grandma's last wish

Story-Script: Julie Selbo. **Producer:** William Teitler. **Director:** Warner Shook. **Cast:** Jane Connel as Grandma, Kate McGregor-Stewart, Paul Avert, Kelly Wolf, Gregory Itzin.

When her family decide to bundle her off to an old folks' home, Grandma gets her last wish - and make 'em appreciate what it's really like to be old.

If the shoes fit. . .

Story: Louis Haber. **Script:** David Gerold. **Producer:** William Teitler. **Director:** Armand Mastroianni. **Cast:** Dick Shawn as Bo Gumbs; Harry Goz, Catherine A. Hayes, John Zarchen.

Vote for Bo Gumbs! It's real easy. He's the archetypal Big Daddy politico. No chat about nuclear waste, pollution, taxes, much less inflation. He tells voters what they want to hear and they go to vote with a smile on their mugs and a bellyful of ole Bo's barbecued ribs. But his world begins to swirl when entering a one-horse town's hotel run by a magic bellboy and a fat, jolly maid.

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EPISODE GUIDE

I'll give you a million

Script: David Spiel, Mark Durand. **Producer:** T.J. Castronova. **Story-Director:** John Harrison. **Cast:** Keenan Wynn, George Petrie as Duncan and Jack, Michael Freeman, Catherine Battisone.

Veteran millionaires make the ultimate deal. Duncan Williams gives a million bucks for all rights to Jack Blaine's soul. Jack figures he's got nothing to lose... until he learns he's dying. Then, as Duncan always knew, Jack panics and offers two million to dissolve the contract. He dies before Duncan collects. Never mind, someone else wants Jack's soul. Enter: Brad Fisher as... The Devil. And he always gets his due, right?

Inside the closet

Story-Script: Michael McDowell. **Producer:** William Teitler. **Director:** Tom Savini. **Cast:** Fritz Weaver as Dr Fenner, Roberta Weiss as Gail.

Gail is a lucky girl! She's found a room, off-campus, while at veterinary school. Dr Fenner, the Dean, is her landlord. Nice enough fella. Nice enough room. Has all the prerequisite fixtures and fittings. Plus one. A mini-closet... which turns out to be home for something that is not quite a postgrad student...

In the cards

Story: Carole Lucia Satrina. **Producer:** William Teitler. **Script-Director:** Ted Gershuny. **Cast:** Dorothy Lyman as Caterina/Catherine, Carmen Matthews, Terri Keane, Johann Carlo, Woody Romoff.

Young Madame Caterina (Irish, despite the name) is a popular tarot card reader. Because she only ever tells good fortunes - until a real gypsy slips her a deck of ominous, forbidding cards. And she can't get rid of them. The damned things won't even burn.

It all comes out in the wash

Story-Script: Harvey Jacobs. **Producer:** T.J. Castronova. **Director:** Frank DePalma. **Cast:** Vince Edwards as Gropper, James Hong, Ellen Winthrop.

Tycoon Henry Gropper runs through life felling hospitals for shops, running companies that club baby seals and make tainted drugs and ordering partners killed. Guilty? Not a jot! Not since using



Tippi Hedren encounters a haunted computer in *Mookie and Pookie*.

the Chow Ting Laundry. Does a great job on shirts, and washing sins away. But Gropper finds out the hard way - 'No tickie, no cleanee!'

Levitation

Story: Joseph Payne Brennan. **Script:** David Gerrold. **Producer:** T.J. Castronova. **Director:** John Harrison. **Cast:** Vic Tayback as Kharma, Brad Cowgill as Frank, Anthony Thompkins, Cynthia Frost, John Marzilli.

The Great Kharma, once renowned as Houdini's protege, has sunk to flea-pit fairgrounds. His act is so tame it has teenage fan Frank needing him from the audience - worse still, explaining his tricks! Enraged, Kharma invites the lout on-stage. If the kid wants magic, then magic is what he's going to get as Kharma takes the rise out of him. Or, well, puts it into him!



A cute Tom Savini creation from *Inside the Closet*.

The madness room

Story-Script: Thomas Epperson. **Producer:** T.J. Castronova. **Director:** John Hayes. **Cast:** Stuart Whitman, Therese Pare as the Osbornes, Nick Benedict as Fox.

A spoilt wife and her lawyer-lover plot to give her millionaire husband a fatal heart attack in a specific room of the Osborne house. Legend says anyone occupying this room becomes mad. The murder backfires when intruded upon by an out-of-board spirit named Ben. Or is it Edward Osborne?

Mookie and Pookie

Story: Dan Kleinman, Marc Fields. **Script:** Kleinman. **Producer:** T.J. Castronova. **Director:** Timna Ranon. **Cast:** Tippi Hedren, George Sims as parents of title-twins, Ron Asher, Justine Bateman, Neil Kinsella.

Teenage computer whiz Mookie Anderson is terminally ill. He asks his twin sister, Pookie, to finish the task of imprinting his spirit into his computer after his death...

The new man

Story: Barbara Owens. **Script:** Mark Durand. **Producer:** T.J. Castronova. **Director:** Frank DePalma. **Cast:** Vic Tayback, Chris Herbert as Alan and Jerry, Kelly Jean Peters, Billy Jacoby, Paul Jenkins, John Jacobs.

After years of family upheaval - city to city, job to job - alcoholic Alan Coombs becomes a new man, anxious to make good with work and family. His resolution is shattered when a kid he's never seen claims to be his ten-year-old son Jerry. Alan's wife and son Petey corroborate the story. There's even a room upstairs full of Jerry's things. A grim classic of a guy undone by the demon alcohol... or then again by the demon Jerry.

The odds

Story: Carole Lucia Satrina. **Producer:** William Teitler. **Script-Director:** James Sadwith. **Cast:** Danny Aiello, Tom Noon as Tommy and Bill, Robert Weil, Anthony Bishop, Mario Todisco, Michael Quill, William Magerman.

Tommy Vale is a legend among bookies. Never refuses a bet. Not even when he realises the guy on a winning streak and offering him double or nothing is Bill Lacey - a loser who committed suicide years ago because of gambling debts. And Lacey's big bet? That Tommy will be dead by 8.00 am tomorrow.

EPISODE GUIDE

Painkiller

Story-Script: Haskell Barkin. **Producer:** William Teitler. **Director:** Armand Mastroianni. **Cast:** Peggy Cass, Lou Jacobis as the Turmans, Farley Granger as Dr Roebuck, Faye Sappington.

Poor Harvey Turman. He's got this nagging back-ache – and a wife to match. He tries all known cures. No relief! His family medico prescribes the inevitable cure. The root cause of his misery must be eradicated – Harvey's wife.

Slippage

Story: Michael McDowell. **Script:** Mark Durand. **Producer:** William Teitler. **Director:** Michael Gornick. **Cast:** David Patrick Kelly as Richard Hall, Philip Casnoff, Kerry Armstrong, David Lipman, Harriet Rogers.

Graphic designer Richard Hall, quite simply, is ceasing to exist. He disappears from family photos, social security records, he no longer gets mail – and his wife's comes addressed to her maiden name. Even his mother doesn't know him anymore. He's slipping into another dimension. Into *The Twili... er Darkside!*

Snip, snip

Story: Howard Smith. **Script:** Howard Smith and Tom Allen. **Producer:** T.J. Castronova. **Director:** Terence Cahalan. **Cast:** Bud Cort, Carol Kane, Paul Micalé, Ed Kenney.

An impoverished warlock seeks revenge on the winner of lottery millions he felt he'd won. He finds there are some powers stronger, well, more professional than his amateur efforts.

The tear collector

Story: Donald Olson. **Script:** John Drimmer.

mer, Geoff Loftus. Producer-Director: John Drimmer. **Cast:** Jessica Harper as Pru, Victor Garber as Ambrose, Linda Lee Johnson, Eric Bogosian, John Rothman, Kay Walby.

Pru has been weeping most of her life. Every, but *everything* makes her cry. Good news for Ambrose. He's a curator of sorrows. Armed with delicate glass vials, he collects the kind of deep sorrow tears which can heal human hearts. Pru falls for Ambrose but he says she must finish her sobbing and leave him. Miffed, she grabs her vial and runs...

The word processor of the gods

Story: Stephen King. **Script:** Michael McDowell. **Producer:** William Teitler. **Director:** Michael Gornick. **Cast:** Bruce Davison, Karen Shallo, Bill Cain, Jon Matthews, Patrick Piccininni.

Just (whatever you do) don't (repeat, don't) press EXECUTE or DELETE. I said don't...



Left: Even the undertakers are unable to persuade Grandpa Tolliver (Eddie Bracken) to accept the fact that he is dead in *A Case of the Stubbins*. **Right:** More nightmarish scenes to be found in *Tales from the Darkside*.

THE 'FIRST RUN' AT SUCCESS

The future for *Tales from the Darkside* looks a little brighter since the Lexicon Broadcasting System (LBS) renewed its syndication of the series for another year, starting in September 1986. Realising that the 11.00/11.30pm slot (on U.S. TV), traditionally turned over to comedy series, has failed to come up with a long-standing hit in that format for the last five or so years, LBS is pinning its hopes for a late night breakthrough on a four or five-year run with *Tales from the Darkside*.

Much of the credit for the series' chance at longevity goes to co-producers George Romero and Richard Rubenstein's determination to avoid network syndication. With network syndication not only are the major broadcasters keen on being involved in every step of a series' production, but if the first four weeks of the show don't pull in the ratings, the networks can cancel the series forthwith. Not so with the first run syndication arrangement Romeo and Rubenstein's Laurel Enterprises was able to secure with the independent-based LBS, which guarantees all 24 half-hour episodes being kept on the air for at least a year. This

means that *Tales from the Darkside* doesn't immediately have to sell itself to an audience, but rather build one up over the course of its first season.

"NO FRILLS BUDGET"

Rubenstein also points to another aspect of the series being attractive to LBS – its "cost efficient, no frills budget". Half the episodes were shot in a warehouse in east Los Angeles that was converted into a soundstage, and the other half in an abandoned studio in Long Island. Each episode reportedly cost about \$110,000, or \$2,600,000 for the whole year, and as LBS is recouping somewhere in the vicinity of \$20,000 for each of the five national 30-second commercial breaks every week, the gross return will more than cover the production cost.

The second year's production cost for *Tales from the Darkside* is expected to climb to \$125,000 per episode, but LBS plans to schedule six 30-second commercial spots (for national use) in each episode, leaving the stations with three and a half minutes for local use.

However, the only real gauge of *Tales from the Darkside*'s financial success will be if the series continues in weekly first run production at least another two years beyond the 1985-86 season. If it does, the possibility of the show being screened in Britain is significantly increased.



T
ALES FROM THE
DARKSIDE

BRAZIL.

Right: Raymond Chandler, or what? Jonathan Pryce as Sam Lowry. Far right, top: A robot-like Samurai Warrior ready for battle. Far right: Sam Lowry, 'armed' and dangerous. Bottom right: Grotesque creatures of Sam's imagination. Below: The Birdman of Brazil.



Brazil, where hearts were entertained in June,
We stood beneath an amber moon,
And softly murmured, 'Some day soon',
We kissed and clung together,
Then, tomorrow was another day.
The morning found me miles away,
With still a million things to say,
Now, when twilight beams the sky above,
Recalling thrills of our love,
There's one thing I'm certain of,
Return, I will,
To old Brazil."

(Brazil - The Song)

Partially inspired by a schmaltzy thirties song and a haunting image of escape to a dream world, set in a foreboding Christmas 1984 and anywhere but in Brazil, and promoted as a black political romantic fantasy

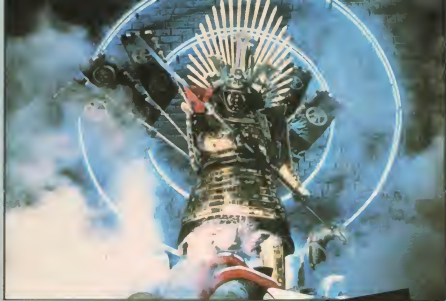
comedy, Terry Gilliam's new film *Brazil* begs classification. So what else is new?

The director of *Time Bandits* has returned to enthrall audiences with a darker, yet no less intriguing, follow-up to his last success. Co-scripted with dramatist Tom Stoppard and actor-writer Charles McKeown, and produced by Arnon Milchan (whose credits include *The King Of Comedy*, *Once Upon A Time In America* and the upcoming *Legend*, directed by Ridley Scott), *Brazil* is scheduled for release in late February.

ANGLO-AMERICAN ANTICS

At first glance the Anglo-American cast appears as whimsically random in its line-up as the film's conception, but, as with most things 'Gilliam', the madness does have some method; which is probably why Robert De Niro dons a





balaclava and becomes a freedom-fighting, *free* enterprise plumber. The central roles of Sam Lowry and Jill Layton, the "innocents", are played by relative newcomers to the screen, Jonathon Pryce and Kim Griest. A highly regarded stage actor, Pryce immediately took to Gilliam's script, and especially the role of Sam Lowry, having to "fight for the part in the end". Kim Griest has picked up her own share of attention on Broadway and recently landed the starring role opposite John Heard in *Chud*.

Sam Lowry's wealthy and fanatical fashionable mother is played by Katherine Helmond, of *Soap* and *Time Bandits* fame. The latter film also starred Ian Holm who turns in another fine performance in *Brazil* as the hopelessly incompetent Kurtzmann, Sam's boss (possibly a sly tip of the hat to Gilliam's old boss Harvey Kurtzman,

Top: Sam Lowry, (a la Blade Runner!) in the neon jungle of Brazil. Right: Michael Palin as Lowry's friend of subtle menace, Jack Lint. Far right: Katherine Helmond as the young (looking) mother of Lowry. Below right: Mrs Ida Lowry undergoes extreme plastic surgery. Opposite page: Lowry scrambles amongst waste paper and Christmas shoppers.



worked on as assistant editor). The rest of the principals include a delightfully ruthless Michael Palin and Bob Hoskins (the acclaimed actor from the television series *Pennies From Heaven* and the film *The Long Good Friday*) as the belligerent State heating engineer. These characters highlight the extremes of nature, human and bureaucratic, which form a major part of the world of *Brazil*.

"IF THE WORLD WAS DREAMING"

So, what is *Brazil*? To hear Gilliam talk about his film leaves you only a little wiser, and raises further questions. Says Gilliam, "It has an awful lot to do with the sensibilities of people. There is a feeling things are out of control. It's as if the world was dreaming. Mind you, it's a terrible cheat in a way, writing a film like *Brazil*. We don't provide any answers. It just points out what is obvious, but people don't think about it half the time." And there are few directors around as skilled as Gilliam at choreographing chaos. In

Brazil satirical anarchy rules OK, and hyperbole is the order of the day. Gilliam hopes "people will catch themselves laughing and suddenly realise 'I shouldn't be laughing at that, that's horrendous'." However, he says he's not deliberately searching for that response, "I don't want to make a grim story. I want to make entertainment."

While the look of *Brazil* may be reminiscent of *Metropolis* and *Bladerunner*, and the latter's own film noir 'feel', it shows an absurd, yet uncomfortably familiar society which is part Orwell, and more than part Gilliam. His eye for eccentric and flamboyant visuals, and his ability to create a pervasive mood to suit the story are fully evident. In this he is significantly aided by Norman Garwood, the production designer, who worked on *The Missionary*, Roger Pratt, the director of photography, who worked with Gilliam on *The Meaning Of Life* (2nd unit), and George Gibbs, the special effects supervisor, whose list of credits also

includes *The Meaning Of Life*, as well as *The Temple Of Doom*, *Conan The Barbarian* and *Flash Gordon*.

Principal photography for *Brazil* began in London on November 21, 1983, based at the Lee International Studios. Shooting soon moved further afield to locations in London's dockland, a south London power station, at Mentmore mansion (the former Rothschild home in Buckinghamshire) and further still to the Paris suburb of Marne la vallée, at the Palais d'Abraxis apartment complex.

OTHER SIDE OF NOW

What is *Brazil*? If Gilliam is to be believed, it's a comedic nightmare from somewhere where fantasy and reality fuse, from the "other side of now". But then again, as he is quick to add, "because I dislike being quoted, I find I lie almost constantly when talking about my work". I guess you'll just have to see *Brazil* for yourself to find out. ■



THE NIGHTMARE MAN



THE FILMS OF WES CRAVEN

With *The Hills Have Eyes – Part 2* recently released on video, Barry Forshaw analyses the work of director Wes Craven.

On the few occasions that the films of Wes Craven have been noticed by mainstream critics, the howls of outraged horror and disgust have been predictably swift (given the uncompromisingly violent subject matter Craven deals with). It's still true that horror films trigger off an instantly dismissive – and often censorious – response from anything other than the genre magazines (Robin Wood being virtually the sole critic prepared to examine such despised material with intelligence and enthusiasm). What is more depressing, however, is the similar response to this strikingly gifted stylist one finds all too often within genre criticism.

It seems that Craven's two most famous films, *The Hills Have Eyes* and *Last House On The Left* provoke, by their extreme violence, a total blindness to their skilfully detailed anatomising of Craven's perennial theme – the subversion and destruction of the middle class American family (and, by extension, the tensions of class and religious struggles in a wider conflict). In both of Craven's horrifically detailed films, the two "normal" families – the Carters and the Collingwoods respectively – are attacked by their demonic, lower-class alter-egos – viciously incestuous "family groups" whose bloody rending of the normal values of their prey are expurgated in the violent defence put up by the victims (who, like Jon Voight in Boorman's *Deliverance* and Dustin Hoffman in Peckinpah's *Straw Dogs* have to learn to deal with their enemies on alien terms, com-





ing, as they do, from uncommitted or liberal backgrounds).



SOCIAL CONFLICT

Whether or not one concurs with the disturbing points Craven is making is irrelevant. Certainly his films suggest that liberal values are inadequate in the face of social conflict, and the connecting of underprivileged or disadvantaged lower-class characters with violent, destructive evil (finally "put in its place" by more moneyed protagonists) may not please everyone. However, what counts is that these themes are not arbitrarily "grafted on" to the standard horror film situations to add respectability—they are the fabric of the conflict in a barely noticeable strategy.

Craven himself is a soft-spoken individual with a teaching rather than film background. At the age of 30, aspiring to some kind of work in the film industry, he was put in touch with a professional film editor by the late rock singer Harry Chapin, in fact, the singer's brother. Working with the "nuts and bolts" of film-making—editing, synching, cutting, etc., Craven finally became involved with a mountaineering documentary that led to his meeting Sean Cunningham, whom we now know as the director of *Friday The 13th*.

Cunningham, only in his twenties at the time, financed Craven's debut feature—the film that eventually became *Last House On The Left*. Craven was in the fortunate position of being in total control, with a budget that just stretched to the requirements of the film. It's ironic that a film which has called down the wrath of many moral guardians (even before the video issue of the movie) should be based on a film by arguably the greatest of all film directors—Ingmar Bergman's *The Virgin Spring*. But one has to remember that even Bergman's masterpiece had the censor's scissors snipping on it's initial issue. The notorious rape sequence upset people as much as Craven's was later to do—and even Bergman's immense reputation cut no ice with the B.B.F.C.

Craven's film was banned in Britain (it has been subsequently prosecuted on video), and its financial success in the States (takings of \$18 million in 1982) has not helped its reputation as anything other than a grisly shocker.

I remember a showing of the film (under one of its alternative titles, *Krug And Company*) at London's National Film Theatre which progressively emptied the cinema, the audience unable to take its unblinking catalogue of rape and terror—and missing the escalating absurdity of the final retributions (death by chainsaw, gun and a mutilation that has men in the audience groaning!). But for those of you made of sterner stuff, Craven's remarkable movie can still deliver a charge on both the physical and mental levels, and the attentions of serious critics such as Wood, Paul Taylor of *The Monthly Film Bulletin* and the *Movie* staff critics have ensured that the "lowest common denominator" is not the only standard of the film's appeal.

The Hills Have Eyes is more winning in its fusion of various film elements—horror film, siege situation, even a 30s "serial" feel—there's a super-resourceful family dog whose Lassie-like efforts have cinema audiences cheering. There are rough edges galore—Craven has yet to achieve a fully crafted film—but the energy and invention cancel out any imperfections. And the movie, for all its awesome detail, is much more comic in tone than its predecessor. There's quite a bit of black humour in the scenes involv-



Left: Children, don't let this happen to you. In *Swamp Thing* the villainous Arcane (played by Ben Bates) drank a strange potion and ended up being transformed into a hideous beast! Top: Director Was Craven. Above: Girls will be girls! The devil finds work for idle hands in *Deadly Blessing*.



ing the degenerate cannibal family – mostly overplayed by the actors – and the film itself has the feel of a Fifties horror comic).

The film was made on a slightly larger budget than *Last House*, and was filmed under the most trying conditions. It also marked the first appearance in a Craven film of actor Michael Berryman, who promoted his own bizarre appearance to the director as a selling point (Berryman reappears in *Deadly Blessing*, Craven's fourth film, and his forthcoming *Hills Have Eyes Part 2*).

The next venture for Craven was a TV movie, *Summer of Fear*, which was his first feature in 35mm, with *Exorcist* star Linda Blair.

There are two ways of looking at *Summer of Fear*. Firstly, in terms of Craven's total output (it's his biggest failure apart from *Swamp Thing*). Secondly, as a personal project made within the stifling strait-jacket of TV movie limitations. And then it's a different story.



SEXUAL METAPHORS

While the handling of the small-scale story is conventional enough for the most part, Craven's main preoccupation – the destruction of the American Family by a kind of self-willed "doppelganger" – is fully in evidence. Unfortunately, one still has to deal with Linda Blair at her most post-*Exorcist* winsome; a young girl whose family take in her cousin (Lee Purcell), orphaned after a car crash. It

slowly becomes apparent that the newcomer (*Stranger In The House* was the US title) is practising a kind of Ozarkian black magic – voodoo dolls, etc. – to usurp or destroy the female members of her adopted family.

One has to concede, however, that Linda Blair is an actress, and wins one over to her slowly dawning plight, despite the cloying "normalcy" of her character. Yet the film's focus is on the deceptively shy witch played by Purcell, whose minor spells climax in a spine-tingling eruption of eldritch force. And here we're reminded that Craven's editing skill produced the tensions of *The Hills Have Eyes* – making it more lamentable that too much of American TV's creeping blandness lies over most of the film – even down to an ending that has become the most irritating of clichés.

However, if one approaches the film in the spirit of the second condition outlined above, there are pleasures to be winkled out for those who, like myself, regard Craven as one of the most indispensable of modern genre directors.

It's a pity that no-one, not even Craven himself, has much that's positive to say for *Deadly Blessing*, the director's next theatrical feature, because in some ways it's Craven's most fully-achieved film – integrating a suspense narrative with a statement about what lies beneath the bourgeois, and more extreme religious repressions. Admittedly the film never achieves either the grisly intensity of *Last House On The Left* or the horror-comic pace of *The Hills Have Eyes*, but in its exploration of the conflict between a fanatical religious settlement, latterday Hittites (led by Ernest Borgnine at a glitter-eyed pitch of malevolence) and a young widow (Maren Jensen) and her



Left: Craven regular Michael Berryman, as William Gluntz, in *Deadly Blessing*. Above: *Jumpin' Jupiter!* James Whitworth returns as the leader of the cannibal family in *The Hills Have Eyes - Part 2*. Top right: *The Swamp Thing* (Dick Durock) certainly knows how to pick up girls (here Adrienne Barbeau is swept off her feet). Right: Michael Berryman as Pluto, back by popular demand, in *The Hills Have Eyes - Part 2*.



two ex-college friends, Craven imbues the film with a subtle infusion of religious and sexual metaphors. Perhaps the snake that invades Jensen's bath as she lies with wide-opened legs overstates the imagery, but this doesn't undercut the tension as much as the frequent sight through the bathwater of her black swimming trunks – her modesty could have been less ostentatiously preserved with a flesh-coloured pair.

Deadly Blessing's virtues are threefold – a striking painterly eye for visuals such as Maren Jensen's small farm, or the Hittites toiling in the fields (the latter worthy of Polanski's *Tess*); a careful attention to character development (a young Hittite's rebellion against his tyrannical patriarch is well handled), and a complex if convoluted plot which is cleverly negotiated by Craven, albeit to a final off-kilter twist.

Could it be said that Craven's next project, *Swamp Thing*, was doomed to disastrous failure from the start? One would have thought that the gloriously gothic DC comics original created by artist Berni Wrightson (inspired by his



hero, E.C. comics' master of the macabre, Graham Ingles) would lend itself to a sympathetically gruesome visualisation in Craven's *Hills Have Eyes* "Horror Comic" vein. Bill Munn's make-up and suits for the eponymous "Swamp Thing" (a "biologically degraded" scientist, distant cousin of *The Creature From The Black Lagoon*) may have looked a little tacky in the advance stills, of which we were afforded a glimpse. But ... maybe Craven could bring it all together.

Sadly he didn't. The film is a very juvenile affair – sloppy, unfrightingening, and without a trace of Craven's considerable skills in evidence.

But hope is on the horizon for a revitalisation of Craven's reputation with *The Hills Have Eyes - Part 2* – or is it? Despite the presence of Michael Berryman the first reports are not hopeful, and after *Swamp Thing*, the director is clearly in need of a commercial hit (and a little critical acclaim wouldn't be sneezed at either, one might venture). Perhaps the film Craven is preparing now – *Nightmare On Elm Street* – may be his renaissance movie. ■

Death Warmed Up



A Reheated Interview with Director David Blyth

Feature by Alan Jones

One morning, 28-year-old New Zealand born director David Blyth got up after a particularly wild night and looked in the bathroom mirror. And the title for New Zealand's first ever horror movie stared him in the face.

Blyth is a genial man, full of enthusiasm, who admits quite openly to the brutal commercialism behind *Death Warmed Up's* genesis. The sales pitch to international buyers at last year's MIFED film market sums the film up best: "An action/horror film with a frenzied pace, made up of a cocktail of bold and start-

ling images, unimaginable horrors, and driving soundtrack for the 16-25 year-old market". What's missing from that description is that *Death Warmed up* is also hysterically funny. A fact that seems to have escaped our censors who have insisted on four major cuts. No one in their right mind could possibly mistake Blyth's over-the-top approach to the gore as anything else but high camp parody. But of course, in the current climate, that definition can only fall on deaf ears.

Death Warmed Up's plot is arbitrary and nothing more than an excuse to pile one hi-tech incident on another. It blatantly steals ideas from Cronenberg, *The Evil Dead*, *Mad Max*, George Romero,



Diva and even, would you believe, *The Towering Inferno*, as it hurtles through a compact 85 minutes, charting actor Michael Hurst's revenge on a genetic surgeon responsible for turning patients at his island hospital into mutant killing machines. "I know the weakest aspect of *Death Warmed Up* is the storyline", says Blyth, "Or rather lack of it, as it is dominated by incident pure and simple. I went solely for effect and fast pace. It doesn't matter to me as plot isn't what my film is about, it's about visual language and a physicality that will provoke the best response from our target audience". It isn't quite as shameless as that however, as Blyth sees the film as a necessary exorcism in his career to date. He continues, "Emotionally I had a situation which occurred here in England when I was over to help Jim Sharman with *Shock Treatment*. I went through a relationship at the time that mentally blew me apart and, at the same time, I was having a crisis of faith in my artistic ability. *Death Warmed Up* contains all my neuroses at that time and my link back to that dark side. Without getting impossibly pseudo-intellectual, the ending of the film has quite a Jungian denouement, as nothing in life works out pat, it is generally a disappointment. That is why I didn't have the confrontation in the film audiences were expecting, between our anti-hero and the head punk, Spider".

"ENFANT TERRIBLE"

Blyth's previous directing credits include *Angel Mine*, an award-winning TV movie, *A Woman of Good Character*, and a year on the indigenous soap-opera *Close to Home*. So how did he get the New Zealand Film Commission to fund such an exploitative project as *Death Warmed Up*? "Mainly because the Commission was interested in fostering a commercial base for New Zealand films, and they really liked the script - they found it highly amusing. Going back in history somewhat, the Commission started about five years ago and the two people they decided to encourage were myself and Vincent Ward, who directed *Vigil* and has gone on to fame and fortune. I'm considered the 'enfant terrible', as my movies seem to attract diverse and mixed reaction. The Commission have taken a lot of flack over *Death Warmed Up*, but they've stuck by it which I see as a positive reaction against the middle of the road trend which seems to be happy in portraying New Zealand as this grey little society without any of the pressure to dare to be different."

Death Warmed Up cost under a million N.Z. dollars (2.56 to the pound) and was shot in five weeks with a 44-man crew on various well-known locations, including Waiheke Island, Auckland Public Hospital, a meat works and a converted cinema



Above: David Letch as Spider (left) shows concern for his mutant zombie friend. Below: Michael Hurst as Michael Tucker is programmed into becoming a crazed killer.





► studio. "It was all corrugated iron", recalls Blyth, "which we constantly shifted around. It gave us the cheap new wave look we wanted, as a contrast to the island, and was a transition of New Zealand's obsession with the countryside."

Blyth met the co-writer of *Death Warmed Up*, Michael Heath, when the latter wrote a less than complimentary review of *Angel Mine*. "Our paths always seemed to be crossing," says Blyth, "and it was Michael who had the basic idea for the story. One of his earlier scripts had been a rampantly gory effort called *Sticky Ends*, which had been watered down to become *Next of Kin*, and he had also written the John Carradine vehicle, *The Scarecrow*. In all, *Death Warmed Up* had about seven drafts, and as it progressed we cut more and more of the story. We intend to carry on our collaboration, but on our next outing, *Blackbird*, I'll step back more, as I do feel I dominated *Death Warmed Up* a bit too much, as I was so concerned with the style."

A FEW FIRSTS

Although old news by Northern Hemisphere standards, *Death Warmed Up*, apart from instigating a New Zealand horror tradition, was also the first film made in Dolby stereo, and the first also to be filmed entirely using a Steadicam. Blyth fills in the details. "I didn't use any tracks at all. I had two camera crews and I would plan my master shot using the Steadicam contingent, and as we walked it through I would tell the second lot where I wanted to pick up the close-ups. We were averaging 23 to 24 set-ups a day, which is almost up to rock video standards. I also rehearsed with the actors for a couple of weeks so there wouldn't be any great discussions on the first day of shooting. This was a technique I learnt from Jim Sharman who liked the actors feeling comfortable with their roles so the shoot wouldn't get off to a weak start. As for the Dolby, it is my personal belief that it's the sound that makes the film seem more violent than it is. And I'm more than happy with that facet."



Above: Bleached blond Michael Hurst (resembling Rutger Hauer in *Blade Runner*) with Margaret Umbers. Right: "Trust me, I'm a doctor!" Inset: The nurses at Trans Cranial Applications Institute.

The effects in *Death Warmed Up* are the work of Kevin Chisnall who has to his credit *Battletruck*, *Savage Islands* and *The Bounty*. Using imported Indian skeletons and low grade shock tactics, it was up to him to keep David Blyth provided with all the burning torsos, exploding heads, welters of splatter and oozing entrails he could muster. "Kevin's brief was simple", elaborates Blyth, "do it as cheaply as possible! Subtlety wasn't our main aim - I wanted an outrageous and grunty approach. It didn't matter in

the end that the effects all looked rather tacky, as they captured the underlying spirit of the film. We had a prosthetics person from a hospital involved in all the brain surgery scenes, as I wanted the opening of the cranium to be as anatomically correct as possible. All the instruments used were the genuine articles, and if *Death Warmed Up* makes any social comment at all it is in the worry that medical science really hasn't progressed at all since the Middle Ages, especially in the brain surgery area."



HOMO-EROTICISM?

As the star system doesn't exist in New Zealand, David Blyth found that he could get all the actors he wanted for *Death Warm'd Up*. Bruno Lawrence, turns out to be New Zealand's most famous actor. And Michael Hurst's mother, played by actress Tina Grenville, is a television household name. It is Hurst though who supplies the film with one of its most memorable moments, and one that has caused Blyth to be accused of a misplaced homo-eroticism. "I wanted to get into meat without being too Warhol and I think the erection scene on the beach proves that. I'm accused of anti-feminism

on one hand, mainly because of the scene with the nurse impaled with gold scissors, but I honestly didn't want to be too chauvinist. I wanted to exploit men as much as women to provide a balance against that backlash."

And about the criticism that he has stolen all the ideas for *Death Warm'd Up* from other genre classics, Blyth has this to say: "I never consciously ripped them off. The film's title explains that pun anyway. Take the obligatory shower scene for example. In most the victim is the one knifed to death. Here, the victim becomes the killer which is a clever turnaround in my opinion especially as

the main thrust of the story starts from precisely that point. Okay, my film is not as original as *The Evil Dead*, for the simple reason that I purposely wasn't trying to break new ground. I purposely didn't show any of the actors the rushes, so they could never have too much of a level of their performances against the violence. What we ended up with were subtle emotional causes and effects. Even though *Death Warm'd Up* is a 'cartoon', it certainly wasn't just thrown together. It was very carefully thought out and that is why the quality of the movie is such that it draws you relentlessly through such absolute mayhem."





Death Warm Up has a distinctive, radical hi-tech look, featuring effective use of colour to convey atmosphere. The scenes at the Institute of Dr Archer Howell's Trans Cranial Applications were filmed in a corrugated, converted cinema studio which gives the interiors a cheap, new wave style.





A KIWI CLASSIC IN THE MAKING

Report by Tony Crawley

As the first real home-made and financed New Zealand horror movie, *Death warmed up* seems set to give the Kiwi film industry a jolt in the arm. Director David Blyth and Producer Murray Newey have teamed up some distinctive talents for Tucker Productions' premiere feature.

Playwright Michael Heath scripted this punk thriller, where a programmed psycho killer wreaks vengeance on his mad scientist programmer, and then saves the world from this wacko's new army of mutant marauders. This plot from the past is given 'sudden impact' via Michael

Glock, their ace production designer, Mark Nicholas, the composer, cameraman James Bartle and, most decidedly, editor David Huggett (who may not be the first to cut in the faster, i.e. American style, but is about the first to succeed at it).

Similarly, Michael Glock is a genuine find for the country's fledgling fantasy film industry. He grew up on this stuff, particularly telendeavours like *Captain Scarlet*, *Thunderbirds* and *The Avengers*. This is his screen debut, and his task, as he puts it, was to "create an uncomfortable interior". Blyth picked Glock for his winning ways with what I suppose can only, if verbosely, be described as post-high-tech-cum-art-deco-punk-surrealism (whatever that is, it works well).

"WALL-TO-WALL SOUND"

And then there's the sound. The film's main magic comes on the soundtrack. With not merely cinemas but stereo-videos in mind, David Blyth insisted from the outset that his movie had to be Dolbyised. As the encoder is Dolby's property, it has to be hired, so this raises any budget, or lowers what can be spent on the rest of the filming.

It's the ideal film for it", enthuses editor David Huggett. "To make it work you really have to sock it to people."

"Right from the beginning", agrees Blyth, "we realised there was a whole field that hadn't been exploited in New Zealand. Overseas, the whole post-production part is paid a lot of attention and we felt that without getting into a radically expensive budget, we could close the gap in

post-production by getting into such things as sound design. Or, just basically, wall-to-wall sound. It's the sort of film that suits that and the market we're going for. The youth market likes good, solid soundtracks."

Well, they've sure got that, thanks to the project's sound recordist Michael Westgate making use of a boombox, an emulator and the latest state of the Yamaha art synthesiser. And in all, some 42 tracks were fused by sound designer John McKay. "Amplified reality," he calls it. "Sound is an emotional thing, it works on an emotional level."

Reveling in the majesty of Dolby for the first time in his three scores for David Blyth movies is composer Mark Nicholas – an Aucklander who has migrated to Sydney, where he's working on his first opera. For films he prefers to call himself composer and sound designer and accordingly, his 96 page score, utilising synthesiser, woodwind, vocalists, massed voices and a whole slew of percussion, dovetails in and out of McKay's overall aural design.

Nicholas composes for the images, not against them. "With music," he comments, "you can turn an eye-twitch into a moment of terror."

Then, in the best Kubrick tradition, director Blyth scurried around New Zealand cinemas to check their sound systems and found what he feared. Too many of them play Dolby on almost antique speakers. "We're not going to get the optimum," he sighs, "but remember that Spielberg and everyone else have to put up with the same."

—STARBURST— FILM REVIEWS

BRAZIL

"Flashes of brilliance to take your breath away"

Brazil can either be described as a black romantic fantasy comedy set somewhere in the 20th century which concerns two innocents caught up in an Orwellian nightmare world of red tape. Or more simply – a Terry Gilliam film. The latter description should explain all the uncontrolled weirdness on show in yet another uncategorisable epic from one of the most talented and visionary directors around.

But although indescribably off-beat, *Brazil* is an embarrassment of riches. Mind-boggling retro-future production design by Norman Garwood and a non-stop visual assortment of special effects and sight gags are all very well. It's just that 2½ hours of it is at least an hour too much. Gilliam should have spent more time in the cutting room and made *Brazil* a compact film like his brilliant *Time Bandits*. Or could it be that this drawn-out never-ending story is his way of making certain points about life in a 1984-like totalitarian existence situated on the other side of now? Some people may not stay the course to find out.

Whatever, *Brazil* emerges more as an indulgence and a personal paranoia



Above: Jonathan Pryce as Sam Lowry on the dark, mean streets of Brazil. Below: Caught in a nightmare sequence.

doctrine thinly stretched to the limits, which greatly undermines the central truths at the core of a very worthwhile film, even though Gilliam admits he cheats and doesn't provide any answers.

When he highlights actress Katherine Helmond as a matriarch obsessed with plastic surgery or Robert De Niro as an S.A.S. type plumber, Gilliam is on firm ground indeed. But by presenting too many dreams within nightmares within a warped reality, he loses his footing and like *Brazil*'s hero, Jonathan Pryce, and Icarus, flies too close to the sun.

Don't let any of this put you off seeing *Brazil* though. A failure on certain levels it may be, but it is also

without doubt one of the most audacious and intriguing fantasies to come our way in a long while. It offers sharp consumer parodies and supplies some outrageous flashes of brilliance to take your breath away. And it is far more successful than *Buckaroo Banzai* in creating a believably unique and separate universe.

Starring: Jonathan Pryce (Sam Lowry), Robert De Niro (Harry Tuttle), Michael Palin (Jlick Lind), Kim Crichton (Lill Layton), Katherine Helmond (Ude Lowry), Ian Holm (Kurtzmann), Bob Hoskins (Spoon). Directed by Terry Gilliam. Screenplay by Gilliam, Tom Stoppard, Charles McKorm, Special Effects Supervised by George Gibbs.

Alan Jones

BUCKAROO BANZAI

"Too wacky and spaced out for its own good"

Watching *Buckaroo Banzai* is like being on the outside of a gigantic in-joke trying desperately to understand what's so funny. Get onto writer Earl Mach Rauch and director W. D. Richter's wave-length and it may possibly amuse and entertain. But try to come to grips with the impenetrable plot and the uncontrolled weirdness and it's tough going indeed.

Any film that justifies itself with this little phrase - 'Nothing is ever what it seems. But everything is exactly what it is' - is in big trouble as it tries to make sense of a mish-mash of ideas thrown together from serials and Kung-Fu pictures. It took over eight years of script rewrites before *Buckaroo Banzai* made it to the screen - and it looks like it!

Multi-media personality, comic book hero and rock star Banzai breaks into the mysterious 8th dimension with his Jet Car and unwittingly opens a hole in time. Unless it is closed, catastrophe for mankind has been predicted. So backed by his team of commandos, The Hong Kong Cavaliers, Banzai struggles - along with the audience - to find a solution to the dilemma. And this involves Orson Welles' 1938 *War of the Worlds* radio broadcast, an invasion from the unknown Planet 10, an escapee from a lunatic asylum named Dr Emilio Lizardo and an alien Rastafarian.

Buckaroo Banzai is just too wacky



Above: Peter Weller as Buckaroo Banzai, with his motley band of do-gooders, The Cavaliers.

and spaced out for its own good. Technically it's a proficient slice of sci-fi and the production design by J. Michael Riva is often brilliant. But there is nothing worse than being, almost wilfully, left in the dark in the hope that the proceedings will be seen to be saying something outrageously witty or profound. Alex Cox' *Repo Man* caught the feel of an off-kilter universe with strangely blurred edges of reality perfectly and managed to remain on an

accessible plane. This doesn't seem to be in Richter's scheme of things as he blows exactly that quality with a freaked out *melange* of upturned clichés that come across as a reworking of *Doc Savage* and *Strange Invaders* on acid.

John Lithgow's way over the top performance as Lizardo is at least entertaining on the most basic level. But *Buckaroo Banzai* is like watching the last part of a serial, and not knowing

what's gone before. It's certainly unique. But who cares? And don't hold your breath for the promised sequel!

Alan Jones

Starring: Peter Weller (*Banzai*), John Lithgow (*Dr Emilio Lizardo*), Ellen Barkin (*Penny Priddy*), Jeff Goldblum (*New Jersey*), Lewis Smith (*Perfect Tommy*). Directed by W.D. Richter, Photography by Fred J. Koenkamp, Visual Effects Supervised by Michael Fink, Special Make-up by The Burman Studio

SCREAM FOR HELP

"Delightfully tacky"

Even by Michael Winner's usual standards *Scream for Help* is pretty low grade stuff. But for sheer entertainment value of the unsubtle kind, it beats most other recent shockers into the ground.

Christie Cromwell believes her stepfather is trying to kill her rich mother. With good reason as it turns out. She has been following him to various liaisons with voluptuous Brenda Bohle and overhears their murder plan with Brenda's psychotic brother, Lacey. No-



body believes her though, least of all the local police chief, despite some strange 'accidents' that are occurring regularly within the Cromwell household. Too late she manages to obtain a vital piece of evidence - a polaroid of her wicked stepfather in lustful embrace. But as the three assassins close in to stage their deaths, Christie and her mother realise they must fight back with every resource they can muster.

There really isn't any suspense or surprise in *Scream for Help* - it's all too out and dried in a fashion that most apud writer Tom (*Psycho II*) Holland. But Winner tricks out the bare scenario with high voltage, raw-edged violence that keeps interest maintained at a delightfully tacky level.

With the most outrageous score to be heard in years by Led Zeppelin's

John Paul Jones, *Scream for Help* really does have to be seen to be believed. As a parody of every cliché in the exploitation manual it is hysterical even though this facet is obviously unintentional. And actress Lolita Lorré is the trashiest villainess yet to be seen outside a Russ Meyer movie.

Scream for Help is lurid, vulgar, sleazy and tasteless. And at a running time of only 89 minutes - a relief! Are any other recommendations necessary?

Alan Jones

Starring: Rachael Kelly (*Christie*), Marie Masters (*Karen Cromwell*), Fox, David Brooks (*Paul Fox*), Lolita Lorré (*Brenda*), Rocco Sisto (*Lacey*), Corey Parker (*Josh*). Directed by Michael Winner, Produced by Irwin Yablans, Photography by Robert Poynter, Special Effects Supervised by Alan Bryce.

▶ VIDEO FILE ◀

Reviews by Barry Forshaw

It's good to be able to announce the video premiere (care of Thorn EMI) of Wes Craven's long-awaited *The Hills Have Eyes Part II*. Financing for this sequel apparently came from healthy cassette sales of Craven's first saga of Jupiter's murderous desert dwelling clan, and one can only wish Thorn EMI equal success with the follow-up (Craven fought shy of a sequel until his career began to languish after the dismal *Swamp Thing*).

The original *Hills Have Eyes* (along with Carpenter's *Halloween*) was a classic demonstration that the ultimate weapon in a filmmaker's armoury is the editing process – suspense was generated with total command in his clash between a conventional middle class family and its deadly sub-human counterparts. In the new film, Craven has opted for a busload of teenagers as potential victims of the remnants of Jupiter's clan (including Michael Berryman reprising his role as Pluto – who apparently survived the throat-ripping attack of "Beast" – the heroic dog who also re-appears in the sequel). Initially, one regrets Craven's abandonment of his recurrent "family in crisis" theme – we're all thoroughly fed up with the kind of teenagers set up as Aunt Sallys in this movie – particularly as they continue to behave as idiotically as one now expects characters in horror movies to act even when in extreme danger (practical jokes that breed a false sense of security, foolhardy solo trips etc.). But Craven redeems himself by including two characters who rise above the ciphers around them – Ruby, the ex-member of Jupiter's clan, who has become civilized, yet retains elements of her barbaric former life and a blind girl called Cassie – whose name should tell you (if you know your Greek mythology!) that, though blind, she is a "seer" and her enhanced hearing allows her to sound warnings of the dire fate awaiting most of the characters. It has to be said, though, that two solid characters aren't enough to give the film the underpinning it needs – particularly as the marauding remnants of Jupiter's clan are seen far less in the new movie, and lack the bizarre characterisation of the first film.

Still, Craven has a brilliant grasp of exactly what to show in the frame to generate maximum tension, and the film is full of clever demonstrations of the hill peoples' lethal ingenuity (constantly underrated by the foolhardy teenagers), and even though *Part II* never kicks you in the chest like *Hills*



Gotcha! A nightmarish scene from *Dreamscape* (Thorn EMI). Below: Old Hobbits die hard as *Lord Of The Rings* has been re-released by Thorn EMI.



TAKE OUR WORD FOR IT

HITS

Dreamscape (Thorn EMI)
Videodrome (CIC)
The Man With Two Brains (Warners)

PITS

Time Slip (Astra)
Survival Zone (Pyramidi)
Christmas Evil (Iver)

Have Eyes I, you'll get your money's worth from the sequel. And if there's someone out there who hasn't seen the first movie (and doesn't know how much tenser a movie it is!) it'll certainly keep that hypothetical viewer transfixed. (Incidentally, the only way you'll be able to see this film in Britain is on video – Thorn EMI have the rights for an exclusive video release.)

MARCEL'S MORSEL

After *Hawk The Slayer* one looked forward to director Terry Marcel's next movie with as much enthusiasm as one might to treatment for third degree burns. Well, *Prisoners Of The Lost Universe* (Nickelodeon) isn't as depressing an experience as might have been feared, but it's a classic demonstration that if you haven't got the stuffed wallet of a Lucas or a Spielberg (which our Terry hasn't) then you need the special talent that can work miracles on a shoestring à la Carpenter (which our Terry hasn't either). There are moments of clever humour in this one, but the dreary middle ages-style setting of the movie are over-familiar, and talented performers like John Saxton and Kay Lenz look like they'd rather be drawing unemployment cheques.

TOLKIEN BACK

There's a legion of people who boast with pride "Why, I haven't been to a cinema for ages!" And there's a growing batch of individuals who claim: "The only author I read is Tolkien." Those individuals should note that Thorn EMI have re-issued Bakshi's animated *Lord of the Rings*. Whether they should rent it or not...?

EVIL ART

When it comes to unreleased or uncommercial films, the video industry is a double-edged sword. We've all had the misfortune to rent some strikingly packaged item only to find a film that would make Cilla Black's *Surprise, Surprise* seem like a preferable alternative to watching it – in other words, an awful lot of unmitigated junk has swamped the industry. On the other hand, however, some real gems have been unearthed in the last few years – and now Alpha Video (a division of CBS/Fox) have issued something called *Powers of Evil* – and it's one of those videos that forces your friendly neighbourhood video reviewer to do a bit of sleuthing.

Well this one stars Jane Fonda and Terence Stamp. Could this be the

French movie *Histoires Extraordinaires* – an anthology of three Edgar Allan Poe stories made in 1967, and directed by Federico Fellini, Louis Malle and Roger Vadim? And, if it is, why isn't the name of the film's biggest star on the video box? Well – it is *Histoires Extraordinaires* (or *Fantastic Tales or Spirits of The Dead*) and the *William Wilson* episode starring Brigitte Bardot has vanished altogether – as have any credits on the film itself listing either directors or co-stars (such as Peter Fonda, who appears with his sister in the *Metzengerstein* sequence).

Well, is Alpha's immense modesty really necessary? Have they got a difficult art film on their hands that they're cannily trying to pass off as a more conventional horror movie? Yes and no – the Jane Fonda episode about a dissolute countess's sexual and sadistic indulgences is directed by Vadim and has a cripplingly leisurely pace and has only moments of visual beauty to commend it.

But Fellini's episode is a real find – a gem of surrealist filmmaking that will appeal to people who admired the brilliance of the final episode of McGoon's *The Prisoner*. Terence Stamp plays a cracked-up English actor coming to Rome to make a movie, and having a fatal encounter with the devil (as a little girl wearing red nail varnish). But Fellini treats his beloved Rome as a nightmarish vision of hell – and the result is a stunning firework display of bizarre imagery.

BAND VIDEO

Producer/director Charles Band has inherited Roger Corman's mantle as a miracle worker on low, low budgets – and in *Ragewar* (Entertainment In Video) he has enlisted no less than six other directors in creating this vision of a *Tron*-like computer war with Satan as the hapless hero's antagonist. David Allen's sequence, with a giant stone figure, makes one wish it were longer (but animation is expensive), and amidst much familiar material (another customised cat/Mad Max II chase!) several ideas sparkle – such as heavy metal rock music being used as a weapon by the demonic villain!

CRONENBERG TV VERSION

Well, 1984's been and gone – and we can now start referring to that year again as the title of a George Orwell novel. Even though people have played the game of assessing how many of that writer's predictions were realised in that year without me adding my tuppence-worth. But the video release of *Videodrome* (CIC) does prompt one depressing reminder – the carefully orchestrated infringements of personal liberty which got such a powerful



Above: Drew Barrymore as the kid with pyrokinetic powers in the film adaptation of Stephen King's *Firestarter* (Thorn EMI).

foot in the door – not the least of which was the Video Recording Act.

Accordingly, David Cronenberg's dazzlingly surrealistic SF fable about the hazards of T.V. society isn't reaching your home screens in the form its director intended. In order to avoid the draconian prosecutions that would invariably follow the release of the complete movie, C.I.C. have reluctantly allowed the B.B.F.C. to scissor certain sequences from the video release print. And, to be truthful, the movie does survive this enforced trimming, even though Rick Baker fans will greatly regret the removal of the spectacularly graphic demise of the chief villain. But his grisly end being removed from the movie is less ruinous than the removal of much of an earlier scene in which Debbie Harry's sexual games take an alarming turn. This sequence is crucial to establishing the dangerous edge her character treads, and makes her ultimate fate far less motivated than it originally seemed.

Still, much of Baker's bizarre make-

up effects remain to give a disturbing edge to Cronenberg's cautionary tale of a young cable TV executive (James Woods) whose attempts to track down the people behind the mysterious "Videodrome" channel of the title leads to such disastrous consequences as Wood's hand transforming into a hideous synthesis of flesh and steel, as he literally acquires a "hand gun".

The abbreviation of the video version of Cronenberg's examination of a bizarrely McLuhanesque nightmare actually places further in the future the hazards predicted by the plot. It seems unlikely that the desensitised society at the mercy of audio-visual manipulation will take the form mooted here, when the current whole-hearted embracing of the notion that nothing is more dangerous than what we may absorb through the cathode ray tube has emasculated Cronenberg's movie. His strikingly gelatinous imagery still maintains its unsettling power, however.

NEW AND FORTHCOMING

Thorn EMI have a winner in *Dreamscape*, with support from *Firestarter* (Stephen King adaptation number 6.734) and *Warrior of the Lost World*. CBS Fox has *Voltran – Defender of the Universe*. From Avatar: *Garden of the Dead*. And Warner have trouble behind the skirting boards with *Of Unknown Origin*.

BRIEF NOTICES

Steve Martin's delicious science fiction comedy *The Man With Two Brains* (Warner Home Video) is the kind of movie Mel Brooks should still be making. Carl Reiner's screenplay (co-written with Martin) concerns a surgeon who falls in love with the disembodied brain of a dead girl – and that should give you an idea of the shade of black this comedy wears. Marvellous support from Kathleen Turner as Martin's sexually voracious (and sadistic) wife. See it with a few friends.

From CIC, *The Sender* is an above average entry in the psychic powers stakes, with a young woman doctor attempting to communicate with a disturbed young man who can project his nightmares into the minds of others. Director Roger Christian has a powerful visual imagination, and top quality actors such as Shirley Knight help one accept the basic situation. Incidentally, John Landis fans (and what *Starburst* readers aren't?) should note that CIC have also issued his hilarious *Trading Places*.

If anybody missed the Channel 4 Christmas showing of George Pal's *The Time Machine*, they should rush out and rent MGM's video of this marvellous movie – despite distinct compromise of H.G. Wells' novel, it's still one of the great SF films.

Medusa's *The Link* has the excellent Michael Moriarty (last seen to great advantage in Cohen's *Q: The Winged Serpent*) as a man plagued by a terrifying psychic link with his psychotic twin brother, whose grisly murders he is forced to experience. Moriarty distinguishes brilliantly between the capricious killer and his more staid brother, even if the plot (of necessity) has you confused more than once. Ennio Morricone provides another splendidly haunted score. Alberto De Martino directs efficiently.

• IT'S ONLY A MOVIE •

A Column by John Brosnan

I expect you've all been out dancing in the streets to celebrate the arrival of British Film Year. Yeah, me too. I mean, it's all so exciting, isn't it? Here's the British film industry spending millions of pounds in order to tell the British public that the Cinema is the Best Place to See a Film, yet we all know, of course, that watching a film in a crashing airplane is preferable to watching one in a British cinema.

To the film distributors, producers etc it's a huge mystery as to why British film audiences continue to decline at an amazing rate (it dropped another 30% last year) while in other countries, like America, Australia and so on, cinema audiences are on the increase. They scratched their collective heads and came up with the idea that maybe the British public had forgotten what fun places cinemas are. So, with David 'Chariots of Fire' Puttnam at the helm, they've launched this multi-million pound campaign to tell the British public to switch off their video recorders, get out of their warm living rooms and go visit their local hell-hole (if they have a local hell-hole, that is - most local cinemas have already closed down).

Admittedly, the campaign organisers have recognised, to a degree, that the cinemas themselves may be the reason why people avoid them like the plague. So they're spending money on making the cinemas more comfortable, cleaner, warmer etc, and teaching the staff to do weird, unBritish things like smile at the customers.

All well and good but it won't really matter if the cinemas I frequent are turned into palaces with water beds instead of seats and have managers that greet me like a long-lost lover, I'm still not going to be happy. Nor will any other regular British cinema-goer. And the reason is that these cosmetic changes will ignore the real problem of what's wrong with British cinemas. And that, of course, is the outdated style of presentation that British cinema chains inflict on their patrons.

Presumably Mr Puttnam has at some point in his life paid a visit to an American cinema. He will have paid his money, gone in, sat down, watched a couple of trailers and possibly one advert and then, lo and behold, the film he'd paid his money to see would have started.

But if Mr Puttnam should visit a British cinema - say, for example, the Odeon at Leicester Square - he will have a completely different experi-



Has this man just spent an evening in a typical British cinema? Perhaps the British Film Year will cheer him up, or maybe he'll wait for a good action film like *The Terminator* to be released on video rather than visit his local Odeon again.

ence. If he looks in the paper to see what time his film starts he'll learn only that the Odeon's 'doors open' at a particular time. So along he goes and, if it's a popular film, gets in the queue. At the appointed time the doors will indeed open and eventually he will get his ticket. But if he expects the programme to start then he's in for a rude surprise... there is a wait of at least half an hour between the 'doors opening' and the start of the programme.

And as for the start of the actual movie, well, that's even further up the time line. Mr Puttnam will have to sit there twiddling his thumbs while the curtains open and shut numerous times (I've never been able to fathom this mania for constantly opening and closing the curtains in British cinemas)

and he is subjected to an endless number of adverts (the more popular the movie the more adverts you get lumbered with, it seems). And if he is really unlucky he will also have to watch a short supporting film like 'Grape Growing in Tunisia' or 'Up the Murrumbidgee River and Back Down Again'. Then will come the interval and a disembodied voice will advise him that the film he is about to see has no interval and if he'd better get out to the foyer quick-smart and stock up on supplies if he wants to make it through to the other side.

Finally the feature will begin. And at the sight of the censor's certificate Mr Puttnam will hear a groan of relief from the audience. He may even hear applause. Not because the audience are

keen on censorship but simply because it means that the film is actually about to start. Some of them by this time had probably given up all hope of ever seeing it.

On average there is a wait of between an hour and a quarter and an hour and a half from when the 'doors open' at the Leicester Square Odeon and the feature starts. Mr Puttnam, quite reasonably, may think that he could have spent the time more productively than sitting in the Odeon watching countless cigarette adverts. He could have in that time, for example, held another British Film Year press conference and told us all again that the Cinema is the Best Place to See a Film.

THE EXPLOITED

I don't always see eye-to-eye with Alan Jones (mainly because he's taller than me) but I totally agree with him as far as *The Terminator* is concerned. A hell of an action movie and a pretty good science fiction movie too. The only thing that bothered me about it was the blatant way its writers, James Cameron and Gale Anne Hurd (who also directed and produced the film respectively) exploited the work of certain sci-fi writers without giving them any credit. Harlan Ellison, for example, has cause for complaint as the movie draws heavily on his two *Outer Limits* episodes, *Soldier and Demon With a Glass Hand*.

But the sci-fi writer with the greatest cause for complaint is sadly no longer with us. I'm referring to Philip K. Dick who once wrote a story called *Second Variety*. This was set in a future world where humans were locked in a desperate struggle with robot factories that kept producing endless quantities of death machines. The humans are losing the war because the factories keep creating increasingly sophisticated robots that are almost impossible to tell apart from human beings. Anyone who has seen *The Terminator* will spot the resemblance though it's true the film makers didn't use the 'second variety' robot from Dick's story. This was a robot in the shape of a little boy carrying a teddy bear - and if I remember correctly the teddy bear packs a nuclear punch...

I guess the idea of having Arnold Schwarzenegger tote a teddy through the movie was too much for the makers, though personally I think it would have added an interesting touch. ■

Now that *Fireball XL5* has been rescreened on some ITV regions after an absence of almost 20 years, it's interesting to look back to the early sixties and find out how it all started. The year was, in fact, 1961 and Gerry Anderson's company *AP Films* were hard at work coping with the massive merchandise success of *Supercar*. So much so, that a new puppet series was the furthest thing from Anderson's mind. Somehow though, he found the time necessary to put together the new format for the series. Studio veterans, Reg Hill and Derek Meddings designed the advance brochure for *Fireball XL5*, and Hill's assistant Bob Bell was employed as art director. Set in the 21st century, the stories centred around the adventures of Colonel Steve Zodiac and his crew of space explorers.

The series was also the first of Anderson's shows to introduce audiences to the theme of world organisations set up to combat evil. Each new format from then on featured some kind of uniformed force, dedicated to rescuing people in peril and, in the case of *Fireball XL5*, helping to save the world from disaster. Here the forces of good are known as the World Space Patrol, lead by Commander Zero and his assistant Lieutenant 90. Together they controlled Space City, a huge, revolving skyscraper and the futuristic Earth base, from which *Fireball XL5* was launched.

Apart from Steve Zodiac, the ship's crew included Venus, a doctor of space medicine, Professor Matthew (Matt) Matic, science officer, and *Fireball's* navigator, Robert the robot. An additional member of the team was Venus' pet, an alien creature called a Lazoon; a large shaggy beast with a long smooth nose, floppy ears and a flat tail. It was so stupid that Venus nicknamed it Zooney.

With a demand for more spectacular stories, Derek Meddings found himself in charge of a rapidly expanding special effects department incorporating all manner of cinematic techniques from boiling lava flows to exploding spaceships. All these were necessary for *Fireball XL5* as it featured some of

• TV • ZONE

by Richard Holliss



Above: From Gerry Anderson's *Fireball XL5*, the heroic members of World Space Patrol, (l/r) Commander Zero, Steve Zodiac, Venus, Professor Matt Matic and Robert the robot.
Below: *Fireball XL5* ready for take-off.

AP Films first pyrotechnical displays. Various sized models of *Fireball* were built by Meddings, and the design resembled a cross between a space rocket and a large aircraft. Anderson even hit on the novel idea of launching *Fireball* horizontally along a raised track, very similar to the launch system utilised by George Pal in his 1951 film *When Worlds Collide*. Reportedly, Anderson arrived at the name *XL5* after seeing a TV commercial for Castrol XL oil. "I thought it had a nice ring to it", he remembers.

On reaching an alien planet the space rocket could detach its nose cone, a smaller craft called *Fireball Jnr*, and the crew would make a successful

landing leaving the main part of the ship safely in orbit. *Fireball Jnr* had a transparent dome window and four small fins for stabilising the ship in harsh alien environments. Rough terrain could easily be traversed on one-man hover bikes called *Jetmobiles*. In space the mothership featured many home comforts including a lounge, crew accommodation, a prison and a medical laboratory for Venus.

For absolute realism Meddings made use of miniature rocket firing devices for the various spacecraft motors. Sound effects were supplied by sound engineers John and Jean Taylor, and other effects were recorded specially for the series using a

stationary jet engine at a nearby airfield. With *Fireball XL5* the design of the characters became more of a team effort. Puppeteer Christine Glanville was assigned the task of constructing the face of Venus, the first 'leading lady' puppet to star in an *AP Film*. However, Sylvia Anderson, who supplied the voice of the character, couldn't decide on the right type of features. Glanville recalls how her plasticine models would be sculpted, painted, wigged and tested, but always rejected. "This crazy situation continued for almost five weeks and then my father suggested that I should model the face on that of Sylvia herself. So I did it and certainly did the trick. She loved it". Other voices included Gerry Anderson as Robert the robot, David Graham as Professor Matic, Lieutenant 90, the Lazoon and various guest stars, and actor John Bluthall filled in the gaps, while Paul Maxwell voiced Commander Zero.

Fireball XL5 was a huge success in Britain as well as in America. In fact it is the only Gerry Anderson series to have been networked on American television. Mike Nidorf, ITC's President, wrote a letter of congratulations to *AP Films*, and *ATV's* Managing Director Lew Grade later told Anderson, "I feel you have every reason to be proud of your achievement, and I am happy to be associated with it". The licensing rights to *Fireball XL5* were sold to the Licensing Corporation of America, and in Britain the picture strip rights were released to *TV Comic*, who distributed membership cards for a *Fireball* club called *Spacemaker*. But the most popular, and today most highly collected, item from the series was the model construction kit of *Fireball XL5*, sponsored by Lyons Maid Ice Cream and manufactured by Kilmaster.

Fireball XL5 will certainly be welcomed back by audiences, young and old, as an early and highly successful pioneering effort in puppet shows. It was to be the first in a long line of top quality entertainment that was to make Gerry Anderson's companies, *AP Films* and later *Century 21*, landmarks in British television. Sadly we shall never see their like again.



TO ALL OUR READERS

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•RECORD WORLD•

Reviews by Matt Irvine

"A beginning is a very delicate time. Know then that it is the year 10,191. The known Universe is ruled by the Padishah Emperor Shaddam IV, my father..." So opens both the film and the soundtrack of *Dune*, probably the most awaited science fiction film since the beginning of the realm of effects films in the 70's.

Dune Der Wüstenplanet (the German title on my review copy of the soundtrack) features Princess Irulan's quoted line over electronic background music by American group Toto. This blends into the Main Title theme, with the electronics being taken over by the Vienna Symphony Orchestra (well, it makes a change from the LSO). It's difficult to tell where Toto finish and the VSO begin, with the sounds of the synthesiser and the acoustic being difficult to distinguish.

Overall the score suits the barren world of Herbert's Arrakis perfectly, mixing the electronic with the symphonic in a style that suggests touches of Bach, Shostakovich – particularly his 11th symphony which was used in *Cosmos* – and appropriately Maurice Jarre's score for *Lawrence of Arabia*, with the use of the early electronic instrument the Onde Martinet. Jerry Goldsmith also used this instrument in his score for *Star Trek – The Motion Picture*, and it gives a type of sound that not even modern electronics seem to be able to reproduce: an unearthly impression, whether it be the deserts of Earth for *Lawrence* or the everlasting sands of *Dune*.

Most of the tracks do seem to have this mix of Toto and the VSO, augmented where appropriate by the Vienna Volksoper Choir. But the end of side one of the album features a change in style and introduces a composer perhaps more normally associated with this type of music – Brian Eno.

A few issues ago I reviewed a record by the trio of Eno, brother Roger and Daniel Lanois performing the score for the AI Reinart film *Apollo*, and called *Atmospheres*. The same trio are featured on this recording with one piece only, though possibly illustrating the most important point of the film, the "Prophecy". Exactly why two sets of performers were used is one of those mysteries presumably only known to the film makers, but here it is, and in its own way, it works very well; the ethereal sound of Eno complementing the slightly more brash Toto. In all a very enjoyable album.



DISCO DEATH

The cry of Ray Parker Jr. and "I ain't afraid of no ghost" or perhaps "Who are you gonna call?" has dominated the popular airwaves over the last few months, and even if you are one of the few who hasn't seen the film, you would have had great difficulty avoiding the *Ghostbusters* song.

Ray Parker had the hit single, but the film actually had a Main Title by the veteran film composer Elmer Bern-

stein (probably best known for his score for *The Magnificent Seven*). A quirky piece on piano, synthesiser and a small orchestra, it sounds rather like the accompaniment to some French Pink Panther type comedy thriller. Bernstein's other contribution is with Dana's Theme, for the character played by Sigourney Weaver. A softer piece and played on what sounds like a "musical saw", but which is bound to be a synthesiser.

The rest of the *Ghostbusters* sound-

track is made up from established artists and recordings. The Thompson Twins – all three of them – perform in the Name of Love, and Air Supply with I Can't Wait Forever.

Also featured are Laura Branigan and Hot Night; Savin' the Day by Alessi and Mick Smiley with Magic. Like many a film soundtrack, some of these tracks are heard only briefly during the film, usually as snatches caught in passing, but they all help to bring variety to the recording.

MONSTER MUSIC

If Jerry Goldsmith hasn't been scoring *Star Trek* films recently, he hasn't been idle. He provided the music to the other Christmas success, *Gremlins* as well as appearing on screen in the film during the scenes at the Inventors Convention.

However, the score for *Gremlins* – bless their little pointed teeth – isn't entirely Goldsmith, for side one of this short LP is taken up with three vocal tracks. It opens with Michael Sembello with *Gremlins* – Mega Madness, which is appropriate, as his last hit was Maniac from *Flashdance*! The group Quarterflash perform Make It Shine, and lastly Genesis founder member Peter Gabriel goes to town with Out.

The orchestral score occupies side two, and opens with a fanfare worthy of Twentieth Century Fox. This track is titled The Gift and it's followed by The Gremlin Rag. The quieter Gizmo theme, which accompanies a lot of the main action of the film (at least for the first half), leads into a specific piece for the character, which, if this were *The Wizard of Oz*, could only be used for the "Wicked Witch", Mrs Deagle. The scoring features the vindictive nature of Mrs Deagle and even the yowls of her cats. A pity it doesn't include the Gremlin carol singers! The rampaging of the *Gremlins* themselves that occupy the majority of the latter half of the film is usually to the accompaniment of The Gremlin Rag, whether they are causing chaos down the high street or taking over the local picture house. ■

Dune – music by Toto, Brian Eno and the Vienna Symphony Orchestra (Polydor 823 770-1).

Ghostbusters – music composed by Elmer Bernstein (Arista AL8-8246)

Gremlins – music by Jerry Goldsmith (Geffen 54685)

• DATA BANK •

Information from the filing cabinet of Dr Sally Gary

Before getting down to the meat of this month's Data Bank, I have a couple of additions and corrections to recent columns...

In response to Martin Gunther's queries in Data Bank for Starburst 78, I gave a listing of Barbara Carrera's film appearances. What I neglected to mention was her first film, *Embryo* (1976). But I'm not too embarrassed, because no one had to point that out to me!

But... Arnie Teibe of Tottington, Lancs has been kind enough to set me straight on an obscure Madeleine Smith film called *The Devil's Widow* (1972). In case you don't remember, I listed Maddy's movies in Starburst 75, but confessed in passing that I knew nothing of *The Devil's Widow*. Arnie admits that he hasn't seen it himself, but tells me that it was made a couple of years before 1972, and was shelved for a time. The movie "was heralded as a 'comeback' film for Ava Gardner," continues Arnie, "and as a first (and to date, last) directing credit for Roddy McDowall. The original title was, I think, *Tai Lin* and amongst the supporting players were ladies often found in the fantasy genre at the time - Maddy Smith, Stephanie Beacham, and, if memory serves, Veronica Carlson and Caroline Munro."

Using Arnie's alternative title for a starting point, I managed to uncover some more info. The actual alternative title was *Tam-Lin* and, while I'm positive that Ms Munro wasn't in that flick, I couldn't confirm whether La Carlson was. Otherwise, full marks to Arnie!

Someone with a totally unreadable signature from Headingly in West Yorks (are you reading this?) sent me some information about *Star Trek* on Video. Seems I got it wrong in Starburst 76. *Plato's Stepchildren* and *Whom Gods Destroy* are available on tape. Issued by CIC Video the cata-



Gloria Holden vamps it up as Dracula's Daughter.

logue number of the banned episodes is VHN 2084. Thanks for that, whatever-your-name-is, and sorry for the gaff.

HOLDEN ON

Here's a question that's been languishing in my 'in' tray for a couple of months. David Garrett of Bromley, Kent writes to enquire whether I can shed some light on the career of actress Gloria Holden. Truth is, Dave, not really! I know she was born in London in 1909, spent her career in Hollywood and appeared in only two fantasy films:

Dracula's Daughter (1936). Dir: Lambert Hillyer, Scr: Garrett Ford, Ph: George Robinson, Mus: Heinz Roemheld, Art Dir: Albert D'Agostino, SPFX: John Fulton. With: Otto Kruger, Gloria Holden, Irving Pichel, Edward Van Sloan, E. E. Clive, Hedda Hopper.

Miracles for Sale (1939). Dir: Tod Browning, Scr: Harry Ruskin/Marion Parsonnet/James Grant, Ph: Charles Lawton, Art Dir: Cedric Gibbons, Makeup: Jack Dawn, Ed: F. Y. Smith. With: Robert Young, Florence Rice, Henry Hull, Astrid Allwyn, Gloria Holden, Frank Craven, Lee Bowman.

She also appeared in *The Life of Emil Zola* (1937), *Test Pilot* (1938), *A Child is Born* (1940), *The Corsican Brothers* (1941), *Behind the Rising Sun* (1943), *Dream Wife* (1953), *The Eddie Duchin Story* (1957) and *This Happy Feeling* (1968). After that, Dave, you're on your own... unless any one out there has anything to add.

HAWKAAA!

A comic query from James Jones of Manchester. "Have you any information on a film or serial called *Blackhawk*? Marshall J. Reed had something to do with it. Thank you."

Easy-peasy, Jimmy. *Blackhawk* was a Columbia serial of 15 chapters, issued in 1952 and based on the Quality/DC comic character of the same name. Serial Superman, Kirk Alyn, played the lead role. Full cast and credits follow thusly:

Dir: Spencer Bennett/Fred Sears, Scr: George Plympton/Royal Cole/Sherman Lowe, Ph: William Whitely, Mus: Mischa Bakaleinikoff, Prod: Sam Katzman. With: Kirk Alyn (as Blackhawk), Carol Foreman (Laska), John Crawford (Chuck), Michael Fox (Mr Case), Don Harvey (Olaf), Rick Vallin (Stan/Boris), Larry Stewart (Andre), Weaver Levy (Chop Chup), Zon Murray (Bork), Nick Stuart (Cress), Marshall Reed (Alier), Pierce Lyden (Dyke), William Fawcett (Dr Rolph), Rory Malleson (Hodge), Frank Ellis (Hendrickson).

The plot tells how the Blackhawks discover a sabotage ring, led by the beautiful but deadly Laska. When Dr Rolph, inventor of a disintegrator ray, is abducted by Laska, the Blackhawks set off in hot pursuit. They follow Laska into Mexico, but are set upon by Yaqui Indians. Luckily they are saved by a local ranch owner, Borega, and pick up Laska's trail back into the United States. They track her right to the office of her boss, but arrive too late to prevent her

from killing the mastermind behind the whole evil scheme. Laska is taken into custody and they all live happily ever after. How's that?

WHITHER PROWSE?

Wilson of Newcastle wants a filmography for that fine thespian, David Prowse. I think I can satisfy your craving, A.A. The ex-weightlifter has lent his sharply honed acting skills to: *The Horror of Frankenstein* (1970), *A Clockwork Orange* (1971, as Julian, in case you don't remember him in that one), *Frankenstein and the Monster from Hell* (1973), *Vampire Circus* (1973), *Star Wars* (1977, as Darth Vader, but the voice was — of course — by James Earl Jones), *The Empire Strikes Back* (1980) and *Return of the Jedi* (1983). Just where Mr Prowse's acting career will be going now that Darth Vader is dead and gone is anyone's guess. But you can't keep a good man down and, never fear, he shall return...

LEIBERMAN QUERY

Geoffrey Downs of Minehead, Somerset wants to know whether director Jeff Lieberman has made any movies other than *Squirm* (1976), *Blue Sunshine* (1977), and *Just Before Dawn* (1980). The short answer is: No. The longer, and more accurate, answer is: Not that I know of. But, if there's anyone out there who knows better... let's hear from you.

Next month, I'll be looking at a couple of questions that were left out of this month's column for want of space. A complete index to the fantasy films of Fifties science fiction hero Richard Carlson and a rundown on all the movies that have been adapted from fantasy comic strips since the year dot. Be here!

Send all your questions to:
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Is it a bird? Yes! Kirk 'serial Superman' Alyn as Blackhawk (Columbia, 1952).



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